

**GRUNDISBURGH & CULPHO PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held in the Village Hall, Grundisburgh**  
**on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 2026**

NOTICES had been posted according with regulations.

Present: - Messrs. G.Caryer, E.Dingman, C. Dow, A. Dunnett, M. Harris, R. Youngman, Mrs J. Bignell, Mrs.A.Willetts (in the chair), District Councillor C. Hedgley, County Councillor E.Bryce and 45 members of the public

**1. Apologies for absence** Mr & Mrs. Grimwood, Mr.M.Rankin

**2. Parish Council's Annual Report**

The Chairman, Mrs. Ann Willetts welcomed parishioners to the Annual Parish Meeting

The full Annual Report can be viewed on the Parish Council's website <http://grundisburgh.suffolk.cloud>

Mrs. Willetts said that the Annual Parish Meeting provides an open forum for residents to hear from the Parish Council, District and County Councillors, and local organisations about their work over the past year. Unlike formal council meetings, this gathering allows parishioners to ask questions and contribute throughout, ensuring that local voices shape the issues that matter most to the community. The overarching theme of the past year has been community—strengthening Grundisburgh for both current and future residents—and despite challenges, there has been much to celebrate. Though significant concerns dominate the local planning scene.

One was the unexpected refusal of the planning application DC/24/2708/FUL for the Scouts' new headquarters on Stoney Road. Despite careful preparation, pre submission advice from East Suffolk planners, and strong local support, the application was refused at officer level on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2025. The decision caused widespread frustration, prompting a flurry of correspondence between the Parish Council, residents, and planning officers. With backing from District and County Councillors, it was eventually agreed that the Scouts could resubmit the application at no cost to them. The revised proposal, DC/25/4242/FUL, received 44 letters of support locally very quickly. When County Highways withdrew their short sighted objections, the application was eventually approved on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2026. However, rising construction costs now pose a major challenge, and the Scouts are preparing further fundraising efforts, confident of, but not taking for granted continued community backing.

Another issue concerns the approval of six new dwellings on the redundant garage courts at Cranworth Close. Residents, the Parish Council, and District Councillor Colin Hedgley all objected to the scale of the development, arguing that four homes would be more appropriate given the high parking pressures and limited manoeuvrability space. Concerns remain about access during construction, parking displacement, noise, dust, and the impact on service and emergency vehicles trying to access the Close. The decision reflects a failure by East Suffolk planners—and Suffolk County Council Highways—to listen to local knowledge experience and consider the practical realities for existing residents. A rare opportunity was lost to improve Cranworth Close.

Despite objections from the Parish Council and local residents, East Suffolk Council supported by Suffolk County Highways approved the application submitted by Otley College of Agriculture and Horticulture Charity Lane for an HGV training facility.

Charity Lane is a narrow road with no purpose-built passing places over its total length. It is signposted Unsuitable for HGV's. In their presentation to East Suffolk Planning Committee Clopton Parish Council showed photographs of 2 lorries finding no room as they converged on the adjoining B1078 a designated lorry route which has no purpose built passing places either for 6 miles after the Charity Lane junction .

Surely new HGV training facilities should be built on, at the very least A roads not disgorge HGV learner drivers onto totally unsuitable local roads severely compromising the living conditions of local residents.

East Suffolk Council have already started work on a new Local Plan which is anticipated to be adopted in 2029. The call for sites closed on January 9<sup>th</sup> 2026 and a Map of those sites was published 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2026 and can be found on the East Suffolk Council website. Geoff Caryer has kindly produced an A3 copy of the Map which he has put on the displayed board, so if you have any questions about the sites we will try to answer them at the end of the presentations. East Suffolk are not inviting comments at this stage, but there will be a public consultation period once the sites have been assessed by the planners. Sites have not necessarily been submitted by the landowner, but it is anticipated that most of the 7 sites submitted for Grundisburgh have been.

### ***Parish Council's Annual Report cont...***

As soon as the Parish Council have a better plan of the suggested sites it will be published on the web site and a plan put into the notice boards. When the planners have assessed the sites the documents will be posted on the web site and arrangements made for a public meeting in the village.

We still await a decision after the County Council May election, on the Westerfield Quarry. Our County Councillor Elaine Bryce has been very active in opposing it and the Parish Council has objected in the strongest possible terms to the application to extract and process sand and gravel on agricultural land adjacent to Finn Valley Golf Course over a 16 year period and import more material to be processed on what would be an industrial site. Over 1600 objections have been received by the County Council.

On the 11<sup>th</sup> April the PC received the following message from the STOP THE QUARRY GROUP

#### *Upcoming Local Elections*

*Suffolk County Council have informed the Stop The Quarry campaign group that "due to the County Council elections being held on 7th May 2026, a public re-consultation will not take place until after the elections. All who have previously submitted a representation will be contacted directly when this re-consultation takes place."*

*This matters because several councillors who have taken a constructive, helpful, and engaged approach to residents' concerns may not be in post after the election. You may therefore wish to take the opportunity to stay informed about the perspectives and opinions of those standing for election on the proposed industrial pit.*

### **3. District Councillor & County Councillor's News**

#### **District Councillor's News**

District Councillor Colin Hedgley full Report is published on the Parish Council's Web Site Home Page - Important Documents <https://grundisburgh.suffolk.cloud/>

Mr. Hedgley reviewed key issues from the past year and outlined forthcoming developments affecting the parish and wider East Suffolk. Mr. Hedgley began by recalling recurring concerns such as litter on major roads, the impact of Orwell Bridge repairs, the completion of the Chapel Field development, fly-tipping, missed bin collections, and fraud awareness.

As the report notes, these topics have shaped much of the recent local agenda, with Mr. Hedgley reflecting that "the topics included... reducing litter... fly tipping... missed bins and fraud awareness."

A major ongoing issue is the Westerfield Quarry planning application (SCC/0093/25SC), for which a decision is still pending. Clarifications have been requested from the applicant, and the matter will not be determined before the County Council elections on 7 May.

Mr. Hedgley then addressed the reversal of the proposed devolution timetable, confirming that County Council elections will now proceed in May 2026, with District Councils restructured in 2028. He expressed disappointment, stating that "one council for the whole of Suffolk was the best way forward," arguing that the current three-council structure is inefficient for services such as social care and SEND provision.

Planning policy is undergoing significant national reform aimed at accelerating housing delivery. East Suffolk's annual housing requirement has risen sharply from 905 to 1,660 homes, prompting widespread calls for land and visible advertising campaigns. The second phase of the new development plan will shape future growth across the district.

Planning enforcement remains a source of public frustration. Mr. Hedgley explained that enforcement must follow strict legal processes, even when applicants do not, and that appeals can prolong cases for many years. Some actions at East Suffolk have taken "6–10 years to complete."

A new waste and recycling system will be introduced in 2026, with some residents already receiving new bins. Details are available via the council's "Better Recycling" information pages.

The report highlights several community initiatives, including funding secured for Lowestoft's First Light Festival and a new grant scheme encouraging sustainable transport through improved cycle parking. Grants of up to £1,000 are available to parish councils and community groups.

### ***District Councillor's News cont...***

Local infrastructure concerns persist. Boot Street Bridge remains unrepaired, meaning heavy vehicles must continue to divert through Grundisburgh. Potholes and verge damage should be reported via the Suffolk Highways online tool or by calling customer services.

Mr. Hedgley outlined how to report anti-social behaviour, listing issues such as nuisance vehicles, harassment, intimidation, and noise. A dedicated reporting form is available on the East Suffolk website.

Mr. Hedgley's annual funding allocation of £7,500—shared across 17 parishes—has recently supported groups including the Grundisburgh youth project and playing field improvements.

A major new initiative, the Thriving Places Fund, will launch in April 2026, offering £1.5m over two years to support small communities with grants of up to £50,000 for capital projects and £25,000 for revenue costs.

Planning activity in Grundisburgh, 39 applications validated, 33 determined, 16 approved, and 5 refused, with no appeals. The Call for Sites map has been published, and residents are urged to remain vigilant in shaping future development.

Residents are concerned that land currently used for allotments is included in the "call for sites". There use for housing would be a tremendous loss of a valuable village asset. The site owner had asked for a meeting with the Parish Council.

Parishioners expressed their dissatisfaction with the service provided by the Foxhall Recycling Centre and the need for trunk road's litter to be removed and signs cleaned.

Mr. Hedgley said that District Council's current Local Plan would be remain when they are merged into the new devolved Councils and would remain in force until a new Local Plan is produced.

### **County Councillor's News**

County Councillor Elaine Bryce Annual Parish Newsletter 2025-2026 is published on the Parish Council's Web Site Home Page - Important Documents <https://grundisburgh.suffolk.cloud/>

Mrs. Bryce reminded the meeting that we find ourselves in the midst of the Suffolk County Council elections.

She said it had been an absolute privilege and an honour to serve Carlford Division and specifically, Grundisburgh.

One of the very first meetings she had as a County Councillor was with Grundisburgh & Culpho Parish Council, back in May 2021 when she was asked to help with solving the issue of cars parking badly and inconsiderately on the verge at Meeting Lane. She was then asked if it was possible to have oak bollards – "like the ones they have in Woodbridge"; it was a tall order, but she was delighted to support the Parish and fund the oak bollards, and today the verge is looking much improved and the parking issue seems infinitely improved.

Highways is a service which touches all of our lives, and she continues to challenge Suffolk Highways when things don't go right. Most recently, when CityFibre were scheduled to work on the B1079 and concurrently, Anglian Water closed the neighbouring roads, residents in Grundisburgh were marooned – and due to her immediate intervention with Suffolk Highways, CityFibre were prevented from carrying out their planned works, and Anglian Water swiftly rebuked for their unauthorised road closures.

Whilst she would like to resolve all highways matters that come through her inbox, sadly this isn't always possible. With 77 pence in every pound spent Suffolk County Council going on statutory services – Adult Social Care and Children & Young People's services, that leaves just 23 pence in the pound to spend on non-statutory services including our award-winning Trading Standards, Suffolk Fire & Rescue Service, waste and highways. This is genuinely frustrating as it is to the residents that she serves, but she does try her utmost to ensure that where issues do occur, she raises them at the highest level and tries to reach a speedy outcome.

Here in Grundisburgh, you have a long track record in working collaboratively with your neighbouring Parishes – indeed, she first worked with the village back in 2019 when we were fighting the spectre that is the Northern Bypass. Sadly with local government reorganisation going down the route of three separate authorities for Suffolk, that threat seems once more to be on the horizon, with Ipswich and Felixstowe – both in the South Suffolk and Ipswich authority, being supportive proponents of the Northern Bypass.

### ***County Councillor's News cont...***

Many of her other Parishes are devastated to have been “lumped in” with Ipswich and Felixstowe – here in Carlford, we are a beautiful family of rural villages and we must not be swept along in the urban sprawl that threatens to engulf our rural way of life. That’s why she was a huge supporter of the One Suffolk model, as she truly believes it would provide the value for money, cost savings and best way forward that the residents of Suffolk rightly deserve.

She has continued to work very closely with Westerfield, Swilland, Witnesham and Tuddenham as they battle to stop the proposed quarry at Westerfield. This work will continue, hopefully, after the moratorium period, when the application is due to come back before Committee in either June or July.

In answering questions from parishioners Mrs. Bryce said she would support applications for speed restrictions in Quiet Lanes and that the section of the Ipswich Road footpath whose promised restoration been put back on numerous occasions has had its priority status raised and would be carried out very soon after the City Fibre had completed their work in Grundisburgh.

#### **4. Maintenance Group – Grund Force**

Mr. Chris Dow explained that Grund Force is a group of village volunteers willing to give up some of their spare time to “spruce up” our lovely village. The key objectives are enjoyment, safety, making new friends and making a positive difference to our local environment, getting things done independently and saving money. It brings different Village Groups together for a common cause.

They have carried out tasks such as

- cleaning pathways
- painting fencing and railings
- minor repairs to bus shelters and benches
- planting flowers and bulbs
- cutting and tidying hedges
- cleaning and repairing road signs

Funding came from the Parish Council

Recent work included

- Playing Field Pavilion renovation
- Installing an Electric Supply to the Village Green
- Bulb planting
- Signpost renovation

More work is planned on the Playing Field, Pavilion, Children’s Play Area, Ablitts Meadow, Stoney Road, Lyttleton Meadow.

Mr. Dow expressed thanks to the volunteers, fantastic local contractors’ Cavin Doyle, David Ruse, Ben Wallace, WI and Heather Langdon for refreshments, Football Club, Tennis Club, Village Hall and Playing field Trustees and Grundisburgh & District News.

#### **5. St. Mary’s Church**

Children’s & Families Minister Sandra Cresswell said that the Church provided a range of services for families. On Tuesday afternoons a Baby and Toddler Group meets in the Village Hall organised by volunteers Paid for by St Mary's . Up to 15 families attend some coming from surrounding villages. Babes in arms up to 3years old with carers Parents and Grandparents. Word has got around as to how good it is.

Off the Bus Club at the Pavilion. run by JUST 42. has moved there from a start up at the Parish Rooms Being able to go outside onto the playing field is a big plus. A group of young “helpers” have completed training within the club

On Wednesday’s at 3:20 the 456 Club is held in the Village Hall. Children from Grundisburgh Primary School from Class 4,5,6 walk to the Hall. All costs are covered by St Mary's. Food and drinks are provided, Toast is a big attraction. There is always some craft activity

Will Barber has been appointed By the church as a youth worker one day a week for 3 years Grant obtained from the Diocese.

## **6. New Scout Headquarters**

Scout Leader Stuart Ross reported that in 2026 the Scout Group celebrates 70 years of continuous Scouting in the Village and having a modern Headquarters for the future years is vital.

A 14 acre plot of land accessed from Stoney Road just outside the village boundary on which to accommodate a new Headquarters was purchased and Planning Permission, after a long and frustrating process, has been granted.

The Plans include two halls. The main hall. Long and high enough for an Indoor Archery Range' long enough so the Hall can be split into two segments for two meetings at one time and a Meeting Room. Kitchen, toilets, disabled facilities, storage areas. The building will be designed to accommodate multiple users, including outside events, at the same time.

The HQ will provide a home for Grundisburgh's Cubs, Scouts, Explorers, /Brownies and Guides as well as other Scouting organisations. The facilities will also be available for hire by other organisations..

There is still much to do but the new HQ is planned to be ready some time in 2028.

Thanks to the John Batchlor bequest and the Scouts fundraising the cost of the main structure is assured but more will be needed to "finish the job".

**7. Buffet Supper** As there was no further business to discuss the Meeting was closed and a buffet supper served