

Minutes of Kersey Parish Council Annual meeting held on Monday 11 May 2026 at Kersey Village Hall at 7.30pm

Present: John Hume (Chair), Liz Bostock, David Butcher, Penny Calnan and Richard Walker.

In attendance: Leigh Jamieson (BDC) and Simon Dowling (SCC) for part of the meeting. Sarah Partridge (Clerk)

51/26 Election of Chair

John Hume was proposed, seconded and elected as Chair of Kersey Parish Council; a Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Chair was completed and signed.

52/26 Election of Vice Chair

Andrew Rogers was proposed, seconded and elected as Vice Chair.

All Councillors were reminded to check their Register of Interests and updated them as necessary.

53/26 Apologies – Apologies were received and approved with consent from Esme Chapman (personal) and Andrew Rogers (work).

54/26 Accept Members' Declarations of Interest and consider Dispensation requests for Pecuniary Interests

Penny Calnan declared an interest in planning application DC/26/00814 because she is the owner.

55/26 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 April 2026 were confirmed as being correct and signed.

56/26 Public forum and reports

Reports had been circulated to all Councillors and published on the website before the meeting. Both reports are appended to these minutes.

The Chair congratulated Simon Dowling on his election as County Councillor for the Hadleigh Division and welcomed him to his first Kersey Parish Council meeting. Following a Boundary Commission review Kersey has been moved from the Cosford to the Hadleigh Division, which includes Hadleigh along with the parishes of Kersey, Layham, Raydon and Whatfield.

a) Suffolk County Councillor report – Simon Dowling highlighted key points from his report and answered questions. Simon offered to walk the roads in Kersey with Parish Councillors in the hope of working with highways to improve the condition of the roads, potholes are a big concern for residents. Simon encouraged residents to keep reporting highway problems via the SCC website reporting tool.

b) Babergh District Councillor report – Leigh Jamieson highlighted key points in his report and answered questions.

c) Parish Time – Parishioners' opportunity to raise matters and ask questions

Highways contractors were in Kersey recently to clear gulleys in The Street and Church Hill, they only cleared a couple and then photographed others which they did not clear. When will they return to clear these? There are still concerns about the loose gravel spread onto the bound surface of the Church and School carpark. The Clerk will follow this up with the PCC as they had raised initial concerns. It was asked whether The Bell is going to use the Kersey parking management plan for the beer festival at the end of the month?

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57/26 Other appointments

- a) Footpath working group – Andrew Rogers
- b) KCPC (Playground) working group – Esme Chapman
- c) KVG working group – John Hume and Andrew Rogers
- d) People and Place Plan steering group – David Butcher, Penny Calnan, Sarah Partridge and Richard Walker.
- e) SALC Babergh Area Forum – John Hume
- f) Public Transport Liaison – Richard Walker
- g) Village Hall representative – David Butcher
- h) Kersey Playing Field Association – Ex-officio, Chair of Parish Council - John Hume

Long term appointments:

Franey and Rand Charities – Rachael Rogers (reappointed 4-year term ending May 2029)

Nightingale Trust – Natalie Blyth (4-year term ending May 2027) and

David Butcher (4-year term ending May 2028)

The Clerk had confirmed membership of all the Kersey Parish Council working groups.

58/26 Planning applications

a) Progress - None

b) Consider planning applications received: None

c) Note applications received after publishing the agenda:

DC/26/00814 Wickerstreet House, Wickerstreet Green, Kersey, Ipswich Suffolk IP7 6EY

Application for Listed Building Consent - Proposed erection of a greenhouse

Penny Calnan declared an interest and left the meeting.

This application is identical to DC/26/00813, considered by the Parish Council at the last meeting. The Parish Council had resolved by a unanimous decision to fully support the proposal which would be in keeping with the surroundings. When making this decision the Parish Council was fully aware that Wickerstreet House was a listed building and the greenhouse would be in the curtilage. The Parish Council fully considered the impact of the proposed greenhouse on the listed building. Therefore, it was agreed that it was not necessary for the Parish Council to hold a meeting to consider the listed building application DC/26/00814 as it is identical. The Clerk will respond to explain why the Parish Council supports this application.

Penny Calnan rejoined the meeting.

59/26 Clerk's Report

LGR – the government has confirmed there will be three unitary authorities for Suffolk. Kersey will be in West Suffolk. Elections for the new authorities will take place in May 2027 to start functioning in May 2028. The government confirmed funding of at least £900,000 for each new unitary authority to help establish effective services and governance arrangements. The streetlight at the Splash has had the control box cover replaced. Following a query raised at the last meeting the Clerk has been in contact with the owners regarding 3-6 The Street. They have endeavoured to minimise disruption and tried to ensure all contractors park off the road, but at times this is not possible. They hope to complete renovations works soon, so any inconvenience should be short-lived. To comply with data protection legislation the Clerk has been requesting renewed consents from all those who interact with the Parish Council and for people whom the Parish Council holds data for or publishes contact details on the Kersey website. This is a large task, and most people have now responded. The defibrillators are regularly

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checked and reported to Webnos and The Circuit as active and ready in case of an emergency. The website continued to be updated as necessary.

60/26 Correspondence

All Parish Council correspondence had been circulated to Councillors. The following items were noted:

National Grid - Throughout May, contractors will be carrying out vegetation clearance and the coppicing of trees in preparation of the Bramford to Twinstead overhead pylon reinforcement. Where necessary they will get District Council approval for works.

Babergh outdoor sport facilities provision survey – A consultant has been engaged to assess supply and demand issues and identify facilities across the district. The Clerk will respond.

Babergh waste collections - Babergh are making improvements to waste recycling across the district. From 1 June there will be a three-weekly cycle with the compost food waste bin collected every week along with one of the other bins. All residents have been written to and should have received a new green-lidded recycling bin for paper and card and compost bins for all food waste. The current blue bin will become the recycling bin for glass, plastics, metal, and cartons and the existing black bin for all other waste. There are no changes to the brown garden waste bin, if you have chosen to have one. New bin schedules are available on the Babergh website: <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/babergh-waste-collection-schedule-june-to-november-2026>. Any residents who have not received a new green lid bin should contact Babergh.

Leigh Jamieson and Simon Dowling gave their apologies and left the meeting.

61/26 Finance

- a) The Clerk was confirmed as Responsible Financial Officer, Natalie Blyth as Internal Auditor and Penny Calnan as lead Councillor for finance.
- b) The Terms of reference for internal audit and annual internal audit plan for year ending March 2027 were approved. This had minor changes following a review of the current Practitioners Guide.
- c) Financial Regulations were re-adopted without any changes.
- d) Bank mandate arrangements were reviewed; it was resolved to remove Esme Chapman as a signatory and add Richard Walker.
- e) The financial statement showing current bank balances, receipts and payments had been circulated to Councillors before the meeting; A copy is appended to the minutes. This statement was approved.

62/26 Receive report from Internal Auditor

A report from Natalie Blyth our internal auditor, which had been circulated to all Councillors, was received confirming the year end accounts had been checked and are in order.

63/26 Parish Council accounts & governance statements for year ending 31 March 2026

- a) The Annual Internal Audit Report was received and noted.
- b) The Council approved and the Chair signed the year end accounts including significant variances and reserves. Reserves were all considered appropriate.
- c) Dates were set for the period for the exercise of public rights – 3 June to 14 July 2026.
- d) The Annual Governance Statement was approved and signed by the Chair and Clerk.
- e) The Annual Accounting Statements were approved and signed by the Chair.
- f) The Parish Council resolved to certify itself exempt from a limited assurance review. The certificate of exemption was signed by the Chair and RFO.

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g) The Neighbourhood CIL expenditure report was approved and signed. This will be published on the website and a copy sent to Babergh.

All the accounts and audit information will be published on the website before 1 July in line with the Accounts and Audit regulations and the Transparency Code.

64/26 Footpath Working Group report

A report was received from Kevin Pratt. The footpath working group met in March and volunteers confirmed their allocated paths, discussed the mowers; all serviced and ready to go for the season, path problems, risk assessment; all volunteers have received a copy, and completed volunteer consent forms. Replacement way marker signs will be put up as needed to help direct walkers along the correct public footpath routes. It was noted that some people are using bicycles on footpaths – they can be pushed along a footpath but can only be ridden along bridleways. SCC has confirmed our schedule for this year and surface clearance works by volunteers has started, with a second cut later in the year. Although not strictly a Footpath working group matter, at a recent working group meeting the poor state of the Vale Lane triangle was discussed. It was suggested granite setts should be laid at the muddy corner to prevent damage to the grass and the edge of the highway being eroded further. This was discussed at the Annual Parish Assembly where there was full support for this idea. It was agreed the Clerk will raise this with Highways, reminding them it is in the Kersey Conservation Area.

65/26 KCPC Working Group report

Jonathan Marsh sent a brief report. The mower has had a small repair and is now up and running again. The new toddler swing seat will be fitted shortly. A few replacement fence posts will be put in to support the chestnut fencing as necessary.

66/26 Review and adopt policies

- a) Standing Orders
- b) Delegated Powers
- c) Working Group Terms of Reference – Footpath, KCPC & KVG
- d) Complaints Policy and Procedure
- e) Data Protection and Information Security Policy
- f) Data Retention Policy
- g) Disciplinary and Grievance Policy and Procedure
- h) Equality and Diversity Policy
- i) Freedom of Information Publication Scheme Model and Kersey Publication Scheme
- j) Health and Safety Policy
- k) IT and Email Policy
- l) Press, Media and Reporting Policy
- m) Privacy Notices – General and Staff, Councillors and role holders
- n) Safeguarding Policy
- o) Subject Access Request Policy and Procedure

The working group terms of reference, which had minor amendments, were all approved. All other policies were re-adopted without change. They are all published on the website.

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67/26 To consider the 6-month review of the S19 SCC flood investigation report for Kersey

The Parish Council remains disappointed by this report. It still fails to acknowledge the importance of opening weir gates in Hadleigh, local experience shows that this has a significant impact on river levels, when unopened this puts pressure on capacity and causes flooding upstream. The Environment Agency has not acknowledged this fact and states their modelling shows only a minimal difference in flood risk whether the gates are fully closed or fully open. The report also does not acknowledge the fact that Kersey Brook overtopped its banks upstream of the Splash at the footpath bridge on footpath 10. This water then flowed along the footpath and Kedges Lane flooding properties in The Street on its way back to Kersey Brook near The Splash. It appears that if another flood happened again now, nothing significant has changed, unless householders have taken personal action regarding personal flood defences on their property. There is concern that there is no accountability for the medium and long-term recommendations.

The Clerk will work with the district emergency planning officer to review the Kersey Emergency Plan and update any actions as appropriate.

68/26 Renewal of Glebe lease for playground, cricket net and exercise equipment areas due June 2026

The Clerk is liaising with the Kersey Playing Field Association secretary. The Parish Council resolved it would be happy to sign a new lease on the same terms as now for another 15 years.

69/26 Consider progress on how to improve mobile phone reception in Kersey

The Parish Council has been trying to put pressure on network providers to improve the poor and in some areas non-existent mobile phone signals across the Parish. All homes will have to transition to Digital Voice services by January 2027. As Digital Voice relies on a broadband connection that requires a power supply, this raises a significant safety concern. During power cuts or broadband outages — which can occur during severe weather or other emergency incidents — residents may be left with no means of contacting emergency services or others if mobile coverage is also unavailable. Sadly, it seems the Parish Council cannot take up network connectivity problems with providers as they will only discuss these with their customers. Network providers have confirmed they remain committed to maintaining and enhancing their networks and would encourage individuals to report connectivity issues so they can be resolved. EE suggested residents with connectivity problems currently using 5G switch to 4G to see whether this provides a more stable experience. The Parish Council would encourage all residents who do not have good mobile connectivity indoors and outside to report this to their network provider. An article encouraging this has been published in the last two issues of the Kersey newsletter. It was agreed to use the community WhatsApp groups to highlight this to residents. Suffolk Chamber of Commerce suggest lobbying our District and County Councillors and local MP. They would also like case studies of any businesses impacted by poor mobile phone signal which they can use in their lobbying activities. The Parish Council has responded to the DSIT consultation. BT have said they are working on installing full fibre to properties in Kersey, which should help with broadband internet speeds.

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70/26 Agree content for the newsletter articles 'Pride in our Parish' and Community Organisation Spotlight

Pride in our Parish – Liz will draft an article about wildfires and not having bonfires during dry weather.
Community Organisation Spotlight – John is still trying to meet with FoSM and a KVG volunteer to draft articles for Community Organisations Spotlights. Andrew will be reminded about his article with a footpath working group volunteer.

71/26 Training

SALC continues to offer a variety of training as published on their website and circulated to Councillors.

72/26 Reports from other meetings

Police and Parish Forum 11 March and SALC Babergh Area Forum 17 March - meeting notes will be circulated once available.

73/26 Forthcoming meetings

Police and Parish Forum 10 June Capel St Mary library 7.30pm
SALC AGM 9 July 7pm online – Liz offered to attend.
SALC super forum for an update on devolution 2 June at 7pm online

74/26 Any other business – Councillors' opportunity to bring matters to the Council's attention – none.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.30pm.

Appended to these minutes are 8 pages:

Suffolk County Council report from Simon Dowling
Babergh District Council report from Leigh Jamieson
Kersey Parish Council finance sheet

Signed

Date

2025–26

Annual Parish Report

Cllr Simon Dowling

Hadleigh Division - Hadleigh, Kersey, Whatfield, Layham & Raydon

Simon.Dowling@suffolk.gov.uk

2026 Council Elections

I am the new Green councillor for your division, elected during the local elections on Thursday 7 May. Along with other Greens at Suffolk County Council, I will be part of the official opposition. Our group will not be in charge of making decisions, as Reform UK have 41 councillors and will have the majority of votes in the council chamber to pass their decisions. However, we will work hard to hold the council and the Reform administration to account and challenge them and their decisions. If you have enquiries relating to services provided by Suffolk County Council, please make contact with me and I will look into the issue for you.

Council Motions

At council meetings throughout the year, my group passed two motions successfully:

- In May 2025, we proposed that the council ban the giving of prizes on council owned land and writes to the government requesting an outright ban on live animals as prizes on both public and private land. The motion referred to animals intended as pets, and excluded farm animals which may be given as prizes by farmers and farming businesses
- In March 2026, we proposed that following the revelations in the media about the 'Epstein files' and the indication that there would continue to be a high volume of press coverage on the subject, that the council release a statement of support for victims of sexual harm and exploitation, and launch a social media campaign so that survivors in Suffolk would know where they can access local advice and support via Ipswich charity Survivors in Transition

My group also proposed several other motions throughout the year which were voted down by the Conservative councillors in the chamber:

- In March 2025, we proposed that Suffolk County Council gain accreditation as a 'Council of Sanctuary' to welcome refugees and displaced people, ensure that services work together to provide support to them, and to establish more 'Schools of Sanctuary' in the county to teach children why people come to UK and how to treat them with kindness and empathy. Currently there is only one school of sanctuary in Suffolk, whereas Norfolk has thirteen. This was voted

down by the Conservative councillors on the basis that this would create extra cost for the council

- In July 2025, we proposed that the council change its procedures to make it easier and simpler for residents and communities to adopt safer speed limits, including 20mph speed limits. The Conservative administration rejected the motion on the grounds that it was preparing a review of this process already (see details below)
- In December 2025, my group tabled a motion proposing that the council recognise the Rights of Rivers in Suffolk, including to be protected from pollution, to flow freely, and to recover from environmental harm, and that the council should work with districts, boroughs, local communities and national agencies such as the Environment Agency and water companies to advocate for healthy rivers and improved water quality. The administration voted this down on the basis that rivers flowing freely suggested that flooding should be enabled, which was not really what the motion was proposing.

Local Government Reorganisation

This year has seen a number of developments in terms of council structure and plans for the future. Following the announcement of Local Government Reorganisation in December 2024, councils in Suffolk had to submit plans to the government in September 2025 stating how many unitary councils should be set up in Suffolk after county councils, district and borough councils are dissolved in 2028. This means that the services provided by different councils in Suffolk would all be provided by one council for a specific area. Suffolk County Council submitted a proposal to the government for one unitary council for the whole of Suffolk via their 'One Suffolk' campaign. District and borough councils in Suffolk worked together to agree a proposal for three unitary councils in Suffolk: Western Suffolk, Central and Eastern Suffolk and Ipswich and Southern Suffolk, which includes the county town and Felixstowe. At the end of March 2026, the government announced that this was the option they wanted to go forward with. The next step will be for elections to the new councils, which will be held in May 2027. The new councillors will then 'shadow' existing councillors for a year until the new authorities are 'vested' from 1 April 2028.

Devolution and the Norfolk and Suffolk Mayoral Authority

Concurrently with rearranging the councils is the process of devolution in the region. The government announced in December 2024 that a mayoral authority would be set up for Norfolk and Suffolk, with mayoral elections held in May 2026. The mayor and mayoral authority would have responsibility for strategic planning, transport and economic growth for the region and would include some members from local councils, but with the mayor having the deciding vote on decisions. In December 2024, the government announced that the mayoral elections would be delayed until May 2028. Following the announcement in February 2026 that the county council elections in May 2026 were back on, the leader of Norfolk County Council announced publicly that devolution was 'off' in Norfolk. However, the reinstated county council elections means it may be a completely different set of politicians in Norfolk and Suffolk taking this forward. Currently, the plan is for the mayor to be elected in May 2028 and everyone in Norfolk and Suffolk will have a chance to vote.

Libraries Brought Back in House

Following last year's report, the county's library service was brought back in-house at Suffolk County Council from 1 June 2025. Cabinet agreed to put aside £1.8m for the transition period, with the service expected to be back within budget by the second year. As at December 2025 it had spent £0.6m of this fund, with most of the remaining funds already committed. Since taking the service back into SCC, the council has also undertaken a restructure in the libraries 'central team' which has made savings of £340k per annum in staff redundancies. Front line staffing and volunteering numbers remain the same, with most library users stating when surveyed that they had not noticed a difference in the service.

provided. Library 'Friends' groups continue as normal, with all funds raised by the Friends being used to benefit their local branch. Those working in libraries have had to undertake the annual training modules which all Suffolk County Council employees have to complete, and also learn how to use the council's HR and finance processes, which is a lot of change initially. In addition, although the council initially honoured all terms and conditions of employment, from April 2026 employment terms and pay will be harmonised with council standards and pay scales. The transition was reviewed at Scrutiny Committee in March 2026 and during the meeting the libraries team also laid out their volunteer recruitment plan and governance systems for the new service (how it will be overseen). The library service is now part of the council's Public Health and Communities directorate with oversight from the Suffolk Community Libraries Strategic Group which has members from the council and the libraries service.

Council Budget 2026-27

In February 2026, the council set out and voted on its budget for the coming financial year, including its intention to take the maximum 4.99% increase in council tax. Even raising council tax to the maximum, it will still have a budget 'gap' of £5.9m this year which it will have to fund from council reserves. It set a £46.5m target for savings across the council, with more planned in further years to keep the council financially sustainable. The main cost pressures are for social care in adults and children's services, which the council has to provide by law whatever the cost. Future savings will need to be made to service the council's predicted budget gap for 2027-28, which it estimates will be £23.4m.

The council also has an enormous debt for provision of services for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities held under the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). This is described as a 'negative reserve' as the council is allowed to hold the debt, with the government recently providing an override for it until the end of March 2028 and an agreement to fund 90% of each council's DSG debt later this year. This will still leave the council with many millions of DSG debt though, and it will keep rising until the council is dissolved in 2028. The council predicts that its DSG deficit will be -£356.4m by 31 March 2028. It also spends millions on interest costs for the DSG debt which affects the council's borrowing ability and its financial resilience.

The government hopes that the spiralling costs for councils everywhere will be mitigated by the Local Government Reorganisation process. This means that from 2028 there will only be three councils in Suffolk to fund rather than six.

Net Zero Financial Savings

In January 2026, the annual Net Zero Carbon Budget report was brought to Cabinet to assess the progress of the council towards its carbon reduction goals. Previously the council had an ambition to be carbon neutral by 2030, although as the council will cease to exist in 2028 it has adjusted its target to 63% of carbon emissions by 2027-28. The Cabinet agreed that any new measures for carbon reduction during the remainder of this term would have to provide in-year financial savings for the council to be considered. The council's Net Zero work has so far provided £4.8m of savings by reducing electricity and gas use, which is incredibly important at a time when the council is struggling to remain financially resilient. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountability, which is the UK professional body for accountants in the public sector, judges that a council has healthy financial reserves if the amount in its Unallocated Reserves fund is at least five per cent of the year's net expenditure budget, and if the reserve did drop below this threshold, the finance officer for the council (Section 151 Officer) would require remedial action. For 2026-27, five percent of the council's budget is £42.499m, with the amount in Unallocated Reserves being £44.436m. This means the threshold has been met, but only just: the difference is only £1.937m, which means the £4.8m of savings made by the council's carbon reduction initiatives have been critical for financial survival. In terms of the savings made, these include changes to heating controls in Endeavour House in January and February 2025 where gas use was reduced by over 42% without impacting electricity use, reducing energy costs for the council by £30k each year,

and a car park solar array established at Beacon House, comprising three solar canopies with bifacial panels and batteries to capture excess power for use in the building, this is expected to save more than £50k a year.

Suffolk Roads Rated Red by UK Government

As you may have seen in the press, the government recently released RAG (Red, Amber, Green) ratings each county based on how effectively they use the government's highways maintenance funding and the condition of their roads. Suffolk's road maintenance was rated as Red, the worst category. This has struck a chord with residents in the county, who have been clear that they agree and want the quality of Suffolk's roads to improve. Suffolk County Council's administration, however, has denied that the rating is accurate, saying that overall the condition of Suffolk's roads are rated Amber, with the overall Red rating being arrived at because the Department for Transport did not include in its assessment £10m of highways funding that it brought forward from the 2025-26 financial year and invested early in a resurfacing programme in 2024-25. The council has met with the Department for Transport to press for the Suffolk rating to be raised to Amber, pointing out that Department for Transport data shows that only 3% of the county's A roads is in poor condition, which is better than the England average. In addition, in December the council received £2.9m from the Department for Transport's Incentive Fund, which rewards authorities with a record of good performance in highway maintenance. The wet weather since Christmas has caused a lot of damage to roads in Suffolk and the council has been active on social media to provide updates to residents and information on how they make their decisions on which potholes and defects they prioritize.

The council's Highways Maintenance Operational Plan is published on the SCC website and details the size and depth of potholes and the number of days it will take to repair them, based on size and depth. If the council has repaired a defect in line with its published criteria, then claims made for damage to vehicles are not likely to succeed.

You can find this document here: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/highway-maintenance/highway-asset-management/highway-maintenance-operational-plan>

New 20mph Policy

You may recall that last summer, my group proposed a motion at council to make it easier and simpler for local communities to reduce speed limits, including 20mph areas. The Conservative administration voted down our plans, claiming that they were already planning to review their processes and would bring this back for agreement at a later date. At Cabinet on Friday 9 January, the new 20mph speed limit policy was tabled and approved and is now in place for speed limit change requests. The aim of the new policy is to make the process for communities to apply for a 20mph speed limit easier and more streamlined. From now on, any application for a new 20mph limit in an area where recorded average traffic speeds are 28mph and under is likely to be approved by the council. The local county councillor must also be in favour of the change, and there should be majority support from residents. My group pointed out that the new requirement to prove majority support for the new speed limit was likely to make the process more onerous for town and parish councils rather than less, as the new process states that local engagement should be carried out to gauge support, for example a survey or consultation of residents living in the area or along the stretch of road where the change is proposed. Any new 20mph limits will also still need local funding to be in place, unless the scheme aligns with a council programme as part of the Local Transport Plan. The new policy is based on recording speeds as follows:

- Below 28mph – likely to be accepted, with a speed limit sign only, although signs warning that a 20mph zone is ahead may be required

- Between 28 - 32mph - unlikely to be acceptable with signing alone. Gateway signing and traffic calming throughout the area may be required
- Above 32mph - Unlikely to be acceptable without extensive traffic calming measures such as road humps, plus night-time lighting. It would also be subject to a Road Safety Audit

You can read the new 20mph speed limit here on the council website:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/traffic-management-and-road-safety/speed-limits>

Suffolk Minerals and Waste Plan

In December 2025, preparation arrangements were agreed at Cabinet for the county's updated Minerals and Waste Plan, which is now five years old and due for renewal. The plan looks at the county's needs and decides what planning measures need to be taken to meet them – for example, aggregates such as sand and gravel which are necessary for housebuilding. As the government has announced high targets for housing in Suffolk, the county will need more of these materials in future. As the Local Government Reorganisation process means that Suffolk County Council will likely not exist by the time the plan is due to be adopted, the decision made by Cabinet was to undertake all the preparatory work for the new plan and gather evidence for it, so that the new authority/ies who have to publish the plan will be well-placed to put it in place later.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy Approved

In September 2025, the council's Cabinet voted to approve the new Local Nature Recovery Strategy, which was produced following a public consultation on the draft strategy between April and June 2025. The strategy is a new requirement for the council, and sets out priority species and habitats for nature conservation in the county, giving advice on how different habitats can be improved by landowners to protect and encourage nature. Most of the area mapped out for Suffolk's nature priorities is private farmland, and the strategy does not make habitat improvement mandatory, but the officers who have produced the strategy will now work with farmers and landowners to support them and work to find investment for the measures outlined in the strategy. Landowners can use areas mapped in the strategy to produce 'units' of biodiversity for purchase by developers, as developers will be required to meet the government's new Biodiversity Net Gain requirements which state that all development should be increase biodiversity by a minimum of 10%. The units of biodiversity do not need to be on the site of or near the development.

The new strategy should also help Suffolk County Council to improve the land it owns in the county, for example County Farms, and local planning authorities will have to take account of the new strategy when development is considered. In the future, mayoral authorities like the one currently planned for Norfolk and Suffolk will be in charge of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for their area.

Following Cabinet approval, the strategy was shared with neighbouring authorities, Natural England and local partners like district and borough councils and the Broads Authority for their feedback.

You can read Suffolk's final and published Local Nature Recovery Strategy here, including an executive summary, which is a much shorter read: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/planning-waste-and-environment/local-nature-recovery-strategy-lnrs>

New Funding for Buses and Sustainable Travel

In June 2025 we heard that the council had been given a grant of £8m from the Department for Transport for improving bus travel in the county during 2025-26, of which £2.8m was for service improvements and £5.2m of capital funding for improving bus stops, priority measures for buses on busy streets or upgrades to vehicles.

In December 2025 we heard that Suffolk had been awarded £27m of funding for bus services from the government's Local Authority Bus Grant (LABG), this can be used for routes, ticketing or improving infrastructure like bus stops and shelters. Previously known as the Bus Services Improvement Grant, communities and parish councils in Suffolk will be able to suggest improvements in their area and 'bid' for funding via the Suffolk on Board website: <https://www.suffolkonboard.com/>

The council has also been awarded just over £12m from Active Travel England to promote sustainable travel in the county. This can be used to invest in footpaths, cycle lanes and other infrastructure. Examples of how this funding has been used recently include pedestrian crossings in Bridge Street and College Road by Ipswich waterfront, and improved cycle routes including from Ipswich Hospital to the waterfront area, Nacton Road in Ipswich, Main Road in Martlesham, and within Woodbridge as part of the town's current active travel project.

Social Media and Helpful Links

Follow us on:

Twitter - [Suffolk Green, Lib Dem & Independent Group \(@SuffolkGLI\) / Twitter](#)

Instagram – https://www.instagram.com/suffolkgli_group/

Facebook - [Suffolk GLI - Green, Liberal Democrat & Independent Group | Facebook](#)

Website - [Suffolk Green, Liberal Democrat and Independent Group – The GLI Group at Suffolk County Council \(suffolkgli.wordpress.com\)](#)

Cost of Living help and advice:

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/family.page?familychannel=6>

Benefits advice and support:

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/adult.page?adultchannel=0>

Flood preparation advice: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/suffolk-fire-and-rescue-service/fire-and-rescue-safety-advice-in-the-community/what-to-do-in-a-flood>

<https://suffolkprepared.co.uk/get-prepared/risk-advice/flooding/>

Flood recovery advice and support: <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/about/flood-recovery-information-for-suffolk>

District Council report

May 2026

Activity at Babergh has been fairly quiet over the last six weeks due to the County council elections, which occurred last week.

During the campaign, the dissatisfaction and frustration that people are feeling towards all levels of government became apparent. Although I knew that people were unhappy, the thing I found quite sad was that people feel that all aspects of our lives are worse now than they used to be. In fact, several people asked me to name something that was better now and unfortunately, I am still thinking.

Many people were also focusing on national policies, which do not come under the remit of our local authorities. As we move into the new council year, I wanted to take the opportunity to re-iterate that my focus is on issues that effect the residents of Kersey, the other parishes in my ward and the residents of Babergh as a whole.

Community Funding Support

A number of parishes recently received awards from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Brantham Parish Council's plans to install a purpose-built skate park for youngsters and the wider local community. The funding would cover the majority of the project's total cost, with the remainder coming from the National Lottery and the local parish councils.

Also set to receive £100k is a project to upgrade St Andrew's Church in Great Cornard. The Grade I listed building is set to undergo essential infrastructure improvements to ensure the church can be an accessible and welcoming hub for the local community while keeping its heritage intact

Both projects were successful in their bids for District CIL funding, with a total of just under £297k set to be reinvested into Babergh communities, thanks to developer contributions. Also, amongst the successful bids was £85k for Burstall Memorial Hall to help extend the kitchen as part of a wider upgrade and improvement of facilities, and delegated approval was noted for a further award of just under £11.8k for the installation of solar panels, including on site battery storage, at East Bergholt Sports Pavillion.

Failure to pay community levy could cost developer.

Babergh District Council took court action after TTV Industrial Ltd failed to pay the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) on a housing development in Old London Road, Copdock.

As mentioned above CIL money is invested in helping local facilities keep pace with housing growth. TTV Industrial Ltd, based in Old London Road, Copdock, had planning permission to build seven homes on the site, and work on the first three of these started in 2020.

As a result, the business was served a Liability Notice for the required CIL payment relating to the three homes. It later argued, however, that this notice had not been served, while also claiming the homes were exempt because they were self-build.

Babergh District Council's attempts to resolve the matter were unsuccessful, and the business incorrectly maintained no CIL payments were due.

As a result, the council applied to magistrates' court for a Liability Order under the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010.

After a hearing at Norwich Magistrates' Court, District Judge Bone has ordered TTV Industrial Ltd to pay the total CIL liability of £105,475, statutory late payment interest of £31,623, and the council's legal costs of £9,880.

Kersey Parish Council

Finance

Details for Parish Council Meeting on 11 May 2026

Transactions from 1 April 2026 up to 30 April 2026

Bank Balances at 30 April 2026

Current account	£390.10
Instant access savings account	£20,351.63
95 day notice account	£20,030.19
	<u>£40,771.92</u>

Internal transfers between accounts

15-Apr-26 Current to Instant access	£7,500.00
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Income received

13-Apr-26 Babergh Precept - 50%	£8,115.00
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Payments made between meetings

None	£0.00
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Payments for approval at the meeting

None	£0.00
	<u>£0.00</u>

Expenditure Agreed

Prepared by the Clerk for Kersey Parish Council