CODDENHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 16 July 2026 at 7.30pm

at The Coddenham Centre

Present: Cllr Gregory (Chair), Cllr. Mills (Vice Chair), Cllr. Whitehead, Cllr. Soanes, Cllr. Burton, Cllr. Denning

In attendance: District Cllr. Penny
Mark Emms, Operations Director MSDC
Maggie Burt, Clerk & RFO
2 Members of the Public

845 To RECEIVE apologies for absence

None were received.

846 To RECEIVE any declarations of interest or delegated dispensation declarations or to APPROVE such declarations as needed

Cllr. Soanes declared an interest as an allotment holder in relation to agenda item 7. Cllrs. Mills and Whitehead declared their interest in anything pertaining to The Coddenham Centre of which they are trustees. Cllr. Denning declared an interest in things pertaining to the Day Foundation, of which he is a trustee.

The meeting was adjourned.

847 PUBLIC FORUM

(i) To RECEIVE comments from Residents of the Parish on Current Agenda Items

A member of the public raised the issue of the event which had taken place at Shrublands Hall from 10-12 July 2026 and the impact upon the local area. The chair stated that the council would discuss this issue further under agenda Item 6. The member of the public, reading from a prepared statement, advised that he had submitted Freedom of Information requests to, inter alia, Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Constabulary, Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils and Patrick Spencer, MP to elicit details of the pre event oversight by the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) which he contended had been inadequate and that the parish council and others had been misled, particularly with regard traffic, safety and security. He asked for a copy of his statement to be appended to the minutes of the meeting. This was declined, as inappropriate. A second member of the public raised the issue of the emergency road closures which had resulted from emergency police action to evacuate the site due to possible security threats and the inconvenience this caused to local residents.

Mr Emms, in his capacity as Operations Director of MSDC, explained that the road closure and the early closure of the event was prompted by credible evidence being acquired by Suffolk Constabulary that there was a risk of public disorder or possible terrorism. Armed police were therefore deployed to ensure the safety of all. Mr Emms also stated that a Stop Notice had been served on the event organisers when a new Norwich Road accessway was started in advance of the event and that the planning enforcement team at MSDC was tasked with ensuring that this area, and any others significantly affected, would be reinstated, including the accessway onto Sandy Lane, which had been widened significantly. Mr Emms also confirmed that there would also be an independent review of the SAG process which would be undertaken and the results of this review would be made available.

Cllr. Burton queried whether all religious events were non-licensable. He reported that traffic had been extremely heavy and intrusive on Friday and Saturday evenings and some anti-social behaviour had been witnessed with possible event participants relieving themselves on footpaths in the area. Cllr. Gregory reminded everyone that assurances had been given to the parish council and local residents in advance of the event by the chief executive of MSDC and Suffolk police which diverged from actuality in that local residents had been subjected to alternations to a listed site without prior approval, anti-social behaviour, emergency road closures, unusual levels of traffic and an armed response being deployed. Cllr. Mills asked whether, in addition to being inconvenienced, local ratepayers were going be required to meet the costs of the extra police activity. Cllr. Whitehead, in his capacity as district councillor, stated that he had raised the issue of costs with the Police and Crime Commissioner and was assured that any such increase would be covered by the Home Office, under their counter terrorism budget. However, it was noted that this would be funded from general taxation in any event. It also doesn't take account of additional costs to MSDC in enforcing compliance.
A member of the public raised the question of the trial ANPR camera located on Church Road. Cllr. Gregory stated that this trial, designed to identify HGVs which were transgressing the designated lorry route through the village from east to west, had originally been planned to last for three months but that this had been subsequently reduced to one month and that the data needed to be analysed before any conclusions could be drawn. The clerk was requested to contact the PCC to requests that the data was made available as soon as possible and ask him to attend the next council meeting on 23 September 2026 to discuss this analysis. The clerk was requested to share this this data with parishioners when received.
District Cllr. Penny confirmed that he had joined Hemingstone Parish Council as a parish councillor and chair and was looking forward to the two parish councils working together on matters affecting both parishes. The chair welcomed his appointment.
ii) <u>To RECEIVE reports from the county and district councillors</u>
Cllr. Penny reported that, in week 7 of the Better Recycling initiative, things appeared to be going well. Cllr. Mills stated that he was gathering feedback on how the initiative is working on the ground and would feed back to MSDC. Mr Emms, as Operations Director for MSDC, said that feedback should be addressed to him.
Cllr. Penny reported that the Armed Forces Day events had been hit by the extremely hot weather although that event held in Stowmarket had gone well. He also reported that Gateway 14 was proving a success.

The meeting was reconvened.

848 <u>PLANNING</u>
(i) The current planning schedule had been circulated prior to the meeting and there were no open consultation period for planning applications.

849 <u>MINUTES</u>
<u>To RECEIVE and CONFIRM minutes of the parish council meeting held on 26 Mary 2026.</u>
The draft minutes were unanimously **AGREED** to be a true and fair record of the meeting.

850 <u>MATTERS ARISING</u>
<u>To CONSIDER any matters arising from the minutes of the annual parish council meeting on 2 May 2026</u>
It was **NOTED** that there were no matters arising that were not otherwise on the agenda for this meeting.

851 HIGHWAYS

i) To RECEIVE an update from the Highways working group and to AGREE actions as required

The council unanimously **AGREED** to write to SCC Highways to ask for an explanation of how the exit route from the event at Shrublands Hall was agreed and why Coddenham PC and local residents were not informed in advance of the event by Highways that the event exit route was along Sandy Lane and the B1078 through the part of the parish.

ii) To NOTE the resurrection of the Lorry Watch Scheme and to AGREE actions as required.

The council unanimously **AGREED** that the working group would produce a poster and letter as noted in Minute No. 26/27 834 aimed at encouraging residents of the impacted areas to join the Lorry Watch scheme.

iii) To RECEIVE a briefing note from the Highways working group to update County Cllr. Keogh on the traffic issues currently outstanding with SCC Highways and to AGREE actions as required

The working group advised that they would share a draft briefing paper with councillors and, on confirmation, aimed to send it to County Cllr. Keogh by email and that they would request a meeting with him to discuss the issues in more detail before the next parish council meeting.

iv) To CONSIDER the acquisition of new village boundary signs and AGREE actions as required

The clerk had produced a briefing note including two price guides for new village boundary signs. It was **AGREED** to defer any purchase due to the costs involved and greater priorities, including the imposition if a reduced speed limit to the west of the village and on the Norwich Rod.

852 BROOM HILL, MILL HILL, THREE COCKED HAT, ALLOTMENTS AND FOOTPATHS

(i) To RECEIVE the report from the Broom Hill Trust and AGREE such actions as required.

(ii) To RECEIVE the report from the green spaces working group and AGREE such actions as required

The green spaces report had been circulated prior to the meeting, together with a quote from Blackthorne Landscapes as follows

- Additional Area - Broom Hill-Grass cutting, with arisings raked into mounds on site -£275.00 plus VAT.
- Footpath Maintenance - Broom Hill-Grass cutting, with arisings raked into mounds on site - £225.00 plus VAT.
- Boundary & Wild Area Maintenance – Broom Hill-Grass cutting, with arisings raked into mounds on site-
  £200.00 plus VAT.
- Allotment Hedge Cutting – Coddenham Parish-Cutting of allotment boundary hedges, with all arisings raked, collected and removed from site-£375.00 plus VAT.

Cllr. Soanes reported that there were extra works which would be required on Broom Hill to manage the scrub growth along the margins of the grassland, picnic bench area and upper path. This work is necessary to protect the rare and valuable calcareous grassland. Primarily this work is to cut back the bramble and snowberry encroaching on the calcareous meadow and the footpaths at the top of the meadow. Cllr. Soanes stated that the council should attempt to have Broom Hill recognised at a County Wildlife Site and, in order the achieve such status, such work would need to be undertaken. It is recognised that this is not work that the volunteer working parties will be able to undertake. It was **AGREED** that, from the quote from Blackthorn Landscapes, c£500 would fall in the current financial year, 2026/27, and all amounts would be taken into account in setting the 2027/28 Budget.

Cllr. Burton reported that a waymark post on footpaths 5 & 7 was missing. A replacement post of c6' in length would be required and the clerk was requested to acquire more footpath and bridleway discs from SCC PROW. It was **AGREED** that, if no post already acquired could be located, Cllr. Burton was authorised to purchase one.
Cllr. Soanes reported that, of the two small allotment plots available, one had been offered to an existing allotment holder but no response had yet been received. The clerk was requested to chase for a response.

853 CHURCHYARD

(i) To CONSIDER the closed churchyard report and AGREE such actions as required

The Closed Churchyard report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Cllr. Mills stated that, as the aperture for the south-western gates was a non-standard size, any replacement gates would have to be bespoke. Cllr Mills reported that bespoke gate makers in Suffolk are limited in number, with only two being identified; Countryside Quality Gates & Fencing (CQG&F) of Clopton and Hingham Gates Engineering Ltd of Diss. Representatives of both had visited the site and provided quotations which had been circulated prior to the meeting. The details of the quotes are set out in the churchyard report with CQG&F being £5433 plus VAT and the other being £5565 plus VAT. Both quotations entailed the full installation of the new oak gates, including the removal of the old posts and installation of the new posts held by the council. It was **AGREED** to accept the quote from CQG&F and that Cllr. Mills should investigate funding opportunities with local charities and whether MSDC's Pride in Your place grant might be available to cover part of the cost of £5,433. It was also **AGREED** that the council would make a contribution to the cost if necessary.
Cllr. Mills also reported that an approach had been received from Stowlangtoft council for any surplus green hay from the churchyard cut in September and this would be accommodated if possible. He also advised that Suffolk Wildlife Trust had held a churchyard management course at St. Marys churchyard on the previous day to the parish council meeting and it had been held up as an exemplar of what could be achieved.

(ii) To CONSIDER the closed churchyard wall repair report and AGREE such actions as required

The report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Cllr. Gregory stated that the project as still on track for work to begin in Spring 2027 and that the Traffic Management Plan was awaited from the contractors before the JCT (Minor Works) contract would be entered into.
Funding of this major project was discussed and it was **AGREED** that the council should make application to the Public Works Loan Board for a loan for the total amount required to fund the works of approx. £69,000 (ex VAT) as set out in the report circulated prior to the meeting. It was also **AGREED** that Cllr. Mills would arrange a meeting between the Day Foundation, the Gardemau Trusts and the parish council to bottom out any assistance available.

854 FINANCE

(i) To APPROVE the Schedule for Payments for July and August 2025 May and June 2026

The council unanimously **APPROVED** the above schedules.

(ii) To AGREE the bank statements and RECEIVE the budget and precept report for May and June 2026

The council unanimously **APPROVED** the above items.

(iii) To CONFIRM arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all relevant risks

A paper detailing insurance renewal had been circulated prior to the meeting. Insurance companies have been unwilling to quote on renewal premia this far from the renewal date of 1 October 2026. The clerk was requested to contact the companies again and request multi-year quotes from 1 September 2026 with the explanation that any such insurance had to be agreed by council at the 23 September 2026 meeting.

(iv) To APPROVE the acquisition of new defibrillator pads and to AGREE actions as required

Cllr. Soanes reported that the shelf life of the current pads will expire on 1 October 2026. It was **AGREED** that a new set of pads should be purchased from AED before that date.

855 NEXT MEETING

The council unanimously **AGREED** the date of the next meeting on 23 September 2026 with the following items on the Agenda:

- (i) Insurance renewal
- (ii) Road resurfacing issues
- (iii) Shrublands Hall event feedback and actions

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 21.10

Signed: ____________________ Date: