

Coddenham Parish Council Newsletter

A warm welcome from your Parish Council. Working for You. January 2026

Welcome to our newsletter which aims to keep you in touch with the work of the parish council so that everyone in the community feels involved and connected. There are contact details at the foot of this newsletter. Please do get in touch.

Lorry Watch

Three parish councillors attended a meeting with county councillor Matthew Hicks and Suffolk county council's (SCC) trading standards and traffic teams in Ipswich to receive a briefing on how a 'Lorry Watch' scheme might work in our parish. Such a scheme previously existed but has been inactive in recent years. We were advised that a formal lorry watch could be set up and would work with the parish council establishing a group of volunteers who are initially trained online. This group of volunteers would then keep a log and report sightings of lorries breaching the 7.5tonne limit going west through the village via a 'coordinator' (an individual acting as the single point of contact with the SCC trading standards team (STS)). STS would ascertain from DVLA the registered owner of the vehicle and write to them. We were advised by STS that success of the scheme relies on reporting. Experience has shown that, after the first report, misuse drops off. We were further advised that lorry watch groups in Sproughton and Thorndon had been successful.

We have subsequently contacted these groups and received encouraging feedback. This includes "our lorry watch has been successful in reducing HGV traffic through the village", "the process is all very straightforward", "how many volunteers? The more, the merrier", "make it a village-wide project from the start" and "all they have to do is carry a pen and paper (or mobile) and report any sightings to the coordinator".

Given our ongoing problems with HGVs travelling westward through the High Street in contravention of the 7.5tonne weight limit, your parish council is keen to form a Coddenham lorry watch group. We will need a band of willing volunteers to come forward. There are no time obligations involved beyond the initial training, just reporting the HGV violations, as and when seen, to the coordinator.

To volunteer, please contact Maggie, our clerk, details below. You could make a massive difference to the quality and safety of village residents. Let's make this happen!

The Parish Council Budget 2026/27

The January meeting of the parish council includes the setting of a budget for the new financial year commencing 1 April 2026. Much budget preparation work occurs prior to the meeting but the proposed budget is debated and voted on by all parish councillors in the open meeting. The total amount needed to fund the council for a year is termed the "parish precept". Once agreed, the relevant paperwork is then submitted by the clerk to Mid Suffolk District Council (MSDC) which is the local collecting authority. MSDC collect council tax precepts for the county council, Suffolk police, the many parishes as well as their own district council requirement. Our parish precept is but a small fraction of our residents' total council tax bill.

The precept for year 2026/27 is £37,035. This compares to £35,259 collected for 2025/26 and represents an overall 5.0% increase. There are 28 components of the precept and these are set out in the table below. The largest component (35.5%) is the amount required to repay the capital and fixed rate interest on the loans taken out for the building of The Coddenham Centre (TCC). There are two loans and the annual payments of £13,152 will clear one loan in June 2028 and the other by December 2030 although the parish council would like to accelerate the full repayment of the second loan to June 2028 if possible, hence the £350 contingency fund reference in next year's precept.

Our parish is blessed with many open green spaces – the recreation ground, Mill Hill, Broom Hill and the closed churchyard. The upkeep of these spaces, to ensure their safe enjoyment, maintenance and tree stewardship, is anticipated to cost £9,025 in total. Your parish council is now concerned about the state of the churchyard wall facing the B1078 and has been investigating what remedial work may be required and how it might be funded. We are setting aside £1,000 in 26/27 for the costs associated with this – see article below.

Our clerk, who was new to the role in late 2023, has undertaken extensive training to ensure the smooth running of the organisation. With much of that now

complete, we can budget for both reduced time and training costs and a saving of £1,175 compared to the 25/26 budget. Other cost increases of £326, covering general inflation and the maintenance of the village defibrillator, make up the final element of the £1,776 increase in the parish precept.

CODDENHAM PC BUDGET PRECEPT	Budget Year 26/27	Incr/(Decr) from prior year budget
Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) repayments	£13,152	£0
PWLB contingency fund	£350	£350
Clerk's salary & NI	£7,910	-£(677)
Contribution to TCC to support non-revenue generating activities	£4,400	£200
Tree surgery	£1,700	£0
Grounds maintenance	£2,200	£575
Churchyard maintenance	£2,000	£500
Legal fees (re churchyard wall)	£1,000	£1,000
Audit fees	£625	£25
Clerk's training	£100	-£(410)
Newsletters and printing	£520	£20
Waste management	£550	£90
Subscriptions	£468	£18
Insurance	£480	£60
Postage, telecoms, consumables	£416	£16
Street lighting	£270	-£(80)
FOIA request responses	£230	-£(98)
Software licences	£220	£10
Grants (s137)	£200	£0
Web fees	£210	£40
Hall rental	£120	£0
Defibrillator maintenance	£120	£120
Bank charges	£102	£0
Election costs	£100	£0
Info box	£50	£0
Data protection annual registration fee	£54	£19
Wayleave income	-£(12)	-£(12)
Bank interest receivable	-£(500)	£0
TOTAL - PARISH PRECEPT 25/26	£37,035	£1,766

TAXBASE - Number of Band D equivalent dwellings	294.78
Band D property annual precept	£125.64

Spend during the year will be monitored via monthly updates which are published on the parish website. The outturn is then subject to an internal audit and external professional examination to ensure the correct stewardship of these public funds.

3Rs

“When’s the next recycling morning and can I bring a broken toaster and some old pans?”

These questions, asked in the community shop, are a clear indicator that the 3Rs Saturday morning events at TCC are now a fixed part of our community calendar. Since the start in 2024, the quantity of broken and worn-out things brought for recycling has steadily increased.

The events are run by volunteers with funding from our district councillors’ locality budget paying for the hire of TCC. Refreshments are available and previous events have also provided information on reducing food waste and “Grow Your Own.” As 3Rs has become established, the community have also embraced it as a place to meet for a chat over coffee and cake.

After each 3Rs event, volunteers take a van “stuffed” full of small electricals, tetrapaks, batteries, coffee pod capsules and printer ink cartridges to the local recycling centre. Natural corks go to Majestic Wine and spectacles go to SpecSavers. Metals are donated to the local sea scout group who take bulk loads of scrap metals to Sackers to raise funds. Unwanted garden, DIY tools and sewing machines are taken to the charity ‘Tools with a Mission.’ Plant pots go to Katie’s Garden for reuse. Also, there is a collection bin for pill blister packs always available in TCC foyer.

Individual parishioners can recycle unwanted and used items and many do use the above outlets. However, for varying reasons, there are many who cannot. Our community 3R’s events are contributing towards the reduction of ‘black bin’ incinerated waste, helping other community groups and providing a place for coffee and chat.

There will be changes to kerbside recycling collection by MSDC in June. We will all get extra bins and be able to recycle food waste, glass and tetrapaks. However, it will not be possible to put most items collected at 3Rs in the new recycling wheelie bins. So, if you are planning a spring clean cupboard sort out, the next 3Rs event will be on 21 March at TCC. We hope to see you there clutching a few broken or unwanted items and possibly staying for coffee and cake.

Inconsiderate Parking

Residents have complained to the parish council about the parking of vehicles in village roads particularly near Blacksmiths Lane. The parish council is not responsible for on-street parking and on most days there is free car parking at TCC for all to use. A few cars parked in the road actually help to slow down traffic to the 20mph limit but too many at one location or poorly parked vehicles can become a hazard to other road users.

Here are some examples where parking could be improved.



These cars are blocking most of the footway meaning that anyone in a wheel chair or young children in buggies are forced to go right into the traffic lanes rather than being able to use the safe footway.



This car is blocking part of the entrance to Blacksmiths Lane and it is also blocking visibility of the hydrant sign.

The fire hydrant itself would be challenging for the fire brigade to use in an emergency as the car is parked so close that it would be difficult to attach the required equipment without damaging the car.



Please park considerately around the village or use the free car park at TCC.

Churchyard Wall Repair Project

As reported in the January 2025 newsletter, the wall that forms the boundary between the churchyard and the B1078 through the village is, again, starting to show signs of deterioration. It was last maintained in 2016 after a bulge was discovered in some of the flint work. This wall is the responsibility of the parish council who maintain the closed churchyard. The parish council has sought the advice of a specialist historic fabric structural engineer who has advised that the wall requires a regime of repointing and local dentistry repair as part of good maintenance as well as the replacement and re-bedding of the coping and improvements in the weathering details of the masonry to enable the wall to continue in use for years to come. A schedule of works has been prepared and issued and three tenders have been received from suitably qualified contractors. The specialist historic fabric structural engineer has been retained by the parish council to assess the tender returns and advise the council on the appointment of a suitable contractor, the obtaining of the required permissions and liaising with the parochial church council and diocesan architect. No actual works have yet been instructed as the parish council is considering further how to fund such works, which are costly, as well as the timing of any works. The parish council is aware that any works will be disruptive to parishioners and others as the works proposed will require that the B1078 would be subject to single file traffic managed by lights and/or closed for periods to allow safe working whilst works took place.

Coddenham Conservation Area and its Listed Buildings

Coddenham's conservation area was initially designated in 1973 by the then East Suffolk County Council. Its current form was adopted in 2008. A copy of the 2008 review document is available on the websites of the parish council, Coddenham parish and MSDC. If residents have difficulty in accessing a copy, please contact the clerk to the parish council, contact details are below.

If you own a building within a conservation area that is not individually listed, it may still have many interesting features (such as traditional materials or local building details) or it will form part of a group of buildings which together have a special visual quality. As the property owner, you are subject to more planning restrictions than usual. This is so the conservation area may be preserved. Please access the relevant pages on the MSDC website at <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/listed-buildings-and-conservation-areas> and/or speak to a member of the planning department prior to making any external changes. Trees in conservation areas are also covered.

Changes to listed buildings, regardless of whether they are within the conservation area or not, invariably need listed building consent and often planning permission before making any changes, internally as well as externally. There are forty homes within the parish which are listed. Again, owners should follow the guidance on the MSDC website. Further information can also be accessed via Historic England's listed building consent note, available via its website.

Making changes without permission can lead to retrospective action and significant cost in remedy. If these come to light, as is often the case on the sale of a property, this may jeopardise the transaction. It is invariably better to gain permissions prior to starting any work.

The parish council cannot provide advice. However, we will sign-post where we can. Please address any queries to the clerk in the first instance.

How to contact us

Please contact the parish council through the clerk, Maggie Burt. Email: clerk@coddenham-pc.gov.uk
Phone: 07548 152181.

The parish council's new website address is: www.coddenham-pc.gov.uk

Quiet Lanes

Quiet Lanes are nationally recognised designations of single-track roads where visitors and locals can enjoy the natural surroundings and use them for activities such as cycling, horse-riding, jogging and walking. Quiet Lanes Suffolk was a county-wide project carried out between 2020 and 2023 and supported by Suffolk County Council's Suffolk 2020 Fund, the East Suffolk Community Partnerships and the East Suffolk Greenprint Forum. It was led by a voluntary group which supported parishes across the county to identify and designate suitable rural lanes as 'Quiet Lanes' to make them safer for people to use for exercise and more active forms of travel. There are no specific quiet lanes designated in Coddenham although Bulls Road and Church Lane in Hemingstone are so designated. Unfortunately, the funding for this project has now been fully allocated so while, in theory, it is still possible to nominate potential Quiet Lanes, there is no specific funding allocated.

The role of a Parish Councillor

We are keen to encourage others to join the parish council to fill all or some of the (currently) five open positions through the co-option process. Parish councils benefit from having a range of views from residents who want to contribute for the good of the whole community.

Councillors are elected/co-opted to represent the local community, so you must live or work in the parish. Becoming a councillor is a rewarding experience as you can make a change in your community to help improve residents' lives. A councillor's role can include developing strategies and plans for the area, helping with problems and ideas, representing the community, working with other local community groups, making decisions and talking to the community about their needs and what the council is doing.

We encourage anyone interested in becoming a councillor to come and talk to one or more of us and to sit in on a parish council meeting. These are held six times a year. Please contact the clerk or feel free to approach a councillor known to you.