

**Minutes of the Meeting of Lessingham Parish Council held on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2026  
at 7.30pm at Lessingham Village Hall**

**Present:** Peter Peruzzi, Chair  
James Holden, Vice Chair  
Sue Allen  
Helen Twining  
Georgina Dunn  
Sara Burns, Parish Clerk

**Also present:** Cty Cllr Richard Price and 2 members of the public.

**1. Apologies for absence**

No apologies were received.

**2. Declaration of Interest for items on the agenda**

None declared

**3. Public Forum**

a. Public

Two members of the public present joined the meeting to report and contribute comments on the recent issues of the flood gate at Duffields Gap.

Cllr Sue Allen reported the following:

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2026 the sea levels rose up to the flood gates, coming down into Bush Estate and water started entering her property in the early hours of the morning. Two neighbouring properties were also at risk of water entering. This was reported immediately to the Environment Agency (EA) who are responsible for closing the flood gates. Water kept entering her property, therefore she made the decision to close the gates to prevent further damage. She received an update from the EA 4 days later. The EA responded with a letter (available to read on the Parish Council noticeboard) who reported the water levels were not high enough to trigger the flood gate being closed and gave a reminder the gates are only to be closed by trained EA personnel. Since this incident, the Clerk has been in contact with Cty Cllr Richard Price who has included Aaron Dixey from the EA in conversation. A meeting has been organised to discuss the EA's closure protocol, as on this occasion the water levels were only slightly below the trigger level and with ever changing environment conditions, residents feel this should be revised.

Cty Cllr Richard Price noted that Potter Heigham have flood gates and have formed a Flood Warden Group who have been appropriately trained by the EA and have authorisation to close the flood gates when a certain level is triggered. Richard Price suggested this could be an option for residents living at Bush Estate in Eccles-on-Sea. It was noted the long stretch of coastline, and The Broads is a lot for the EA to manage and if communities are passionate about helping, this should be utilised.

The two members of the public commented they would be more than happy to be involved in both the meeting with Aaron Dixey and be a part of a Flood Warden Group. They noted how they are passionate establishing a Flood Warden Group, including the use of a Whatsapp group and noted they would ensure their voluntary roles would be passed on if/when they were no longer physically able to carry out this role. They both noted that they feel it's essential for them to be able to shut the flood gate, if necessary, with authorisation and therefore no repercussions.

Cllr Helen Twining noted the land is not owned by the EA, the flood gates are an EA asset, but the land is owned by someone else, we do not know who. This question will be posed to Aaron Dixey during the meeting to establish ownership.

The members of the public also raised their concerns regarding the lack of Salt Bins on and near to Bush Estate. Many residents were unable to get out to work in the recent icy weather. Cllr Georgina Dunn reported she contacted NCC asking for Heath Road to be gritted. Cty Cllr Richard Price confirmed he has already used his Local Members Fund budget, therefore the Parish Council would need to purchase any desired salt bins, NCC could then be contacted for them to be filled. He also noted how it has been problematic in all rural areas where some bus routes have not been gritted. Cllr James Holden also noted School Road in Lessingham, which is a bus route, had not been gritted.

Clerk to add Salt Bins to next agenda and find prices to present to Cllrs.

b. County/District Councillors

Cty Cllr Richard Price gave an update on LGR, along with reporting on the work he is doing to highlight the problems caused by un-gritted bus routes in rural areas.

A digital report was also circulated, containing updates on the following:

NCC takes first place in the Eastern region in annual Highways and Transport Satisfaction Survey.

Norfolk secures multi-year funding boost for highways and bus services

30-day health challenge in 2026 by NCC

Connect to work to support more than 4000 people facing barriers to employment

Made smarter fund for region's manufacturing businesses set to double

New specialist fire service vehicles for Norfolk.

c. Police

No Police present.

**4. Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2025**

The minutes were approved, all agreed.

**5. Applications for co-option of Parish Councillor (1 Vacancy)**

No applications for co-option currently.

**6. Clerk Report**

a. Passed on thanks from East Anglian Air Ambulance for the donation.

b. Informed all councillors the new Parish Council website is up and running.

**7. Finance**

a. Finances 2025/26 to date. Since the last meeting the following has been received:

i.	Unity Bank	Interest	£50.95
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b. Payments – it was agreed to pay the following. All agreed:

i.	Sara-Louise Burns	Salary Nov & Dec 2025	£329.40
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ii.	HMRC	PAYE Nov & Dec 2025	£79.80
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c. Payments made:

i.	Steve Jackman	Website Update	£175
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ii.	East Anglian Air Ambulance	Donation	£100
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- d. To approve the 2026/27 budget and precept request  
The budget for 2026/27 and precept request was approved. Proposed by Georgina Dunn, Seconded by Sue Allen. Approved by all.
- e. To appoint the internal auditor for 25/26 accounts  
The council appointed Kerrie Wilton as internal auditor for the 2025/26 accounts. Proposed by Peter Peruzzi, seconded by Sue Allen. All agreed.

## 8. Correspondence and Consultations

- a. Parish/Town Council Shared Perspective on LGR from Wells Town Council.  
The council read and discussed correspondence from Wells Town Council on sharing Lessingham PC views on LGR. After discussion, the council have agreed to share their views. Clerk to write the letter.
- b. NNDC Draft Response to MHCLG Consultation on LGR.  
Correspondence received and acknowledged.

## 9. Planning

- a. New Applications  
None
- b. Applications considered between meetings  
PF/25/2595 – The Shack, Church Lane, Bush Estate, Eccles on Sea – Erection on boundary fence 1.65m high, retrospective – **No objections**
- c. Decisions  
PF/25/1868 – Stone House Farm, Ingham Road – Change of use of detached brick storage barn to annexe to main dwelling. Associated external alterations - **Approved**

## 10. Highways and Parish Assets

- a. General Highway issues
  - i. Signs at Bush Estate  
There is a sign at the Entrance to Bush Estate which has been damaged, this needs to be replaced and possibly relocated.  
The council wish to proceed with implementing signs at Bush Estate to include 'No Through Road' and 'No Parking'. Clerk to look in previous minutes to find previous advice on putting up signs. Peter Peruzzi noted there is a local resident who can do professional vinyl and will look into this further.  
It was agreed for this item to be included on the next agenda.
- b. General Parish Council Asset Issues
  - i. Car Parking price increase at Cart Gap. It has been proposed that car parking tariffs will see an inflationary increase for the new financial year of 3.8%. This will be to 5p/10p increments.  
The council noted their concerns that there are already problems with visitors parking in and around Bush Estate and are concerned the car parking price increase will only add to this problem further.  
This will be going to public consultation in January, and the Council have agreed to comment on this.
  - ii. Discuss and agree any action regarding the closure of the flood gates at Duffield Gap  
Discussed, see point 3.A and 3.B

- iii. To discuss road gritting and the Salt Bins in the Parish  
Discussed, see point 3.A and 3.B

**11. Policies to review and adopt**

To adopt the following policies:

- a. Data Information Audit

This has been circulated to members and it was agreed unanimously to adopt the policy.

To review the following policies:

- a. Risk Assessment Schedule
- b. Filming at Meetings
- c. Press & Media

The three policies were reviewed with no amendments necessary.

**12. Items for inclusion on the next agenda**

- a. Signs at Bush Estate
- b. Salt Bins

**13. Date of next meeting: Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2026 at 7.30pm at Lessingham Village Hall**

Meeting Closed at 9.02pm.

**CHAIRMAN**