

THE SALINGS PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Parish Council Meeting held at Salings Village Hall, Great Saling on Thursday, 24th September 2026 commencing at 7pm.

Present:

Cllr P Martin (Chairman)

Cllr A Hooks

Cllr C Bennett

Members of the public: 1

Cllr J Macleod

Cllr T McCarty

County Cllr Carl Johnson

Clerk – Mrs. Lisa Harris

51-26/27

Apologies for absence

None received.

52-26/27

Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

None

53-26/27

Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 29th July 2026, copies of which had been previously circulated to Members, were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

54-26/27

Public Participation

- There were no comments or questions raised during public participation.

55-26/27

District and County Councillor

County Cllr C Johnson provided a report on the following:

- Councillor Johnson provided an update on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), noting that Essex County Council had opposed the proposal, which has now been withdrawn by the Government. This saves an estimated £1 million in structural reorganisation costs, allowing funds to be directed towards other local priorities. District Council elections will proceed as scheduled in May.
- Councillor Johnson also reported on Operation Vanguard, launched in response to concerns around the presence of people from the Wethersfield Airfield Asylum Accommodation. The scheme involves a 3-month trial to provide a visible enforcement presence aimed at preventing crime and addressing community concerns.

Cllr Ann Hooks provided an update:

- Councillor Hooks reported that the Local Plan has been approved to progress to Regulation 19 consultation, starting on 6th November. It was noted that the plan does not include proposed developments at West of Braintree or within the Rayne ward.

56-26/27

Clerk Report

Local Plan: An additional response to the Local Plan Update was prepared by Matthew O'Connell, reviewed by the council and submitted by the Locum Clerk on the 1st

September 2026. This was in response to an additional site being submitted (REF: RAYN2241E) during Regulation 18.

The Play Inspection Company: Annual Play Equipment Inspection has been scheduled. Inspection will be carried out 12-16 weeks from receipt of order (20 August 2026).

SAAA Small Authority Portal: Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments (SAAA) is rolling out a centralised digital portal designed to streamline the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) submission process. An account has been set up ahead of the next submission window, which will serve as a secure environment for uploading documentation, replacing transitional submission methods.

57-26/27

Neighbourhood Plan Review

It was noted that there were no updates to report. It was agreed to defer this item to the next agenda.

58-26/27

Trees

- i. The council **NOTED** that a Professional Tree Survey is scheduled to take place on 12th October 2026.
- ii. Members considered tree inspection procedures following recent councillor training and reviewed the current control measures on the Risk Register. It was **RESOLVED** that a councillor tree walk-around be conducted following the recent training session.
- iii. An update was received regarding the removal of ivy from the Poplars along the eastern boundary of the Playing Fields ahead of the Tree Survey. It was **NOTED** that lower trunk ivy clearance is required prior to the 12th October survey to enable a full structural assessment of trees that have not previously been inspected. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the grounds maintenance contractor undertaking the ivy clearance work under the contract's additional works provision (£25/hour), with the final invoice to be submitted separately for clerk verification.

59-26/27

Community Garden and Allotments

- i. The council received an update confirming that the Anglian Water Pre-Planning Assessment (Ref: PPE-0242557) had verified network capacity and feasibility for a connection off Vicarage Close, but that a formal application is now required to obtain a binding construction quote and design specification.
- ii. Application and Design Assessment Fee Expenditure - It was **RESOLVED** to not approve the expenditure of £1,096.80 (£914.00 + VAT) for the formal Anglian Water Application and Design Assessment Fee.
- iii. Members discussed the physical connection works and boundary meter box installation by Anglian Water. It was **RESOLVED** not to allocate a budget for these works at present, but that the council investigate potential grant funding options available through Anglian Water.
- iv. Members considered quotes and arrangements for the internal site trenching and the installation of the outdoor standpipe structure. It was **RESOLVED** not to allocate a budget at present pending further investigation into alternative funding sources.
- v. Arrangements for managing plant and plot irrigation ahead of the growing season were discussed, including the potential requirement to fund plant watering provisions. It was agreed to review this matter closer to the growing season.

60-26/27

Bardfield Quarry Proposal – Traffic Survey

Members considered quotes received for an independent 7-day Automatic Traffic Count (ATC) survey in relation to the Bardfield Quarry proposal. It was noted that single-location quotes from Capital Road Safety Ltd (£300 + VAT) and Charge Surveys (£325 + VAT) both fell within the previously approved £375 budget limit.

Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Direct the clerk to obtain a quote from Charge Survey covering three locations.
2. Agree that members finalise and agree the specific survey locations via email correspondence.
3. Authorise the clerk, under delegated authority, to approve and proceed with the survey provider up to a total budget limit of £900, to be allocated from the Village Improvements budget line.

61-26/27

Eastlight Community Homes – Fence Maintenance

Members received an update regarding the rotting fence posts along Grove Villas following feedback from Essex Highways concerning highway verge boundaries.

It was reported that, following recent correspondence referencing their 2023 inspection schedule, Eastlight Community Homes confirmed a repair visit was scheduled for 30th September 2026 (Job Ref: RR358167) to carry out initial site repairs.

Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Note the scheduled repair date and job reference details.
2. Monitor the progress and outcome of the repairs following the 30th September visit, including inspecting the condition of the damaged footpath alongside the fence.
3. Instruct the clerk to write to Eastlight Community Homes regarding the overgrown hedge adjacent to the playing field, highlighting that it belongs to an elderly tenant who is unable to maintain it, and requesting that Eastlight take responsibility for cutting it back as part of their tenancy management.

62-26/27

Planning

Planning Applications received:

UTT/26/1570/FUL – Land Off Lubberhedges Lane, Stebbing, Essex

Members considered planning application UTT/26/1570/FUL for the change of use of land to a travellers caravan site, including the provision of a utility dayroom.

It was **RESOLVED** that the council objects to the application with the same comments.

63-26/27

Subscriptions

Members considered the renewal of the annual subscription to the Hundred Parishes Society.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the renewal of the subscription to the Hundred Parishes Society at a cost of £10.00.

64-26/27

Conclusion of External Audit

- i. The council received and **NOTED** the completed Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) External Auditor Report and Certificate for the financial year ended 31 March 2026.
- ii. Members formally **NOTED** the external auditor's 'except for' qualification regarding Section 2, Box 11, along with the auditor's note regarding prior-year comparatives.

- iii. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the publication of the Notice of Conclusion of Audit alongside Sections 1, 2, and 3 of the AGAR on the council website and noticeboards, in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

65-26/27

Finance

Reports and approvals:

- i. It was **RESOLVED** that the Finance Reports for August and September (Appendices I and II) be received and the listed payments approved.
- ii. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the payment of an additional invoice received prior to the meeting from PKF Littlejohn of £252, with the payment to be recorded in the official Finance Report.
- iii. It was **RESOLVED** that the updated Budget Monitoring Report (Appendix III) be received and approved, including the budget adjustments detailed therein.
- iv. It was noted that the July bank reconciliation and statements had been checked and signed by Cllr Macleod. As the August bank statements were not available at the meeting, it was **RESOLVED** that the August bank reconciliation be carried forward to the November meeting for formal verification and signing.

66-26/27

Items to be added to the next agenda

- Policies
- Jobs for Grounds Maintenance contractor.
- Village sign

67-26/27

Next Parish Council Meeting

19th November 2026 7pm

Meeting closed 20.43

Signed:
(Chairman)

Date:.....

Appendix I

Salings Parish Council Finance

24/08/2026

Cash Book Balance From 20/07/2026 £ 34,420.45

Payments Made

Date	Payee	Description	Amount
31/07/2026	Unity Trust	Service Charge	£ 7.00
21/08/2026	ICO	Information Commissioners Office d/d	£ 47.00
21/08/2026	SSE Energy	Streetlights d/d	£ 20.30
21/07/2026	Treecology	Treeworks	£ 480.00

Payments Received

Date	Payee	Description	Amount

Cash Book Balance on 24/08/2026

£ 33,866.15

Bank Balances on 24/08/2026

Unity Trust Bank	£	8,607.31
Unity Trust Reserve Account	£	25,258.84

£ 33,866.15

Less Unpresented Cheques/Direct Debits

£ -

Adjustment

Reconciled Total

£ 33,866.15

Payments to be made

Date	Payee	Description	Amount
28/08/2026	Salaries	Salaries	£ 587.87
28/08/2026	Clerk Expenses	WFH, Council Phone	£ 32.90
28/08/2026	Salaries	Locum Salary and Expenses	£ 326.95
28/08/2026	HMRC	HMRC	£ 25.63
28/08/2026	Salings Village Hall	Hall Hire April - July 2026	£ 119.00

Cash Book Balance After Payments £ 32,773.80

Appendix II

Salings Parish Council Finance

18/09/2026

Cash Book Balance From 24/08/2026 £ 32,773.80

Payments Made

Date	Payee	Description	Amount
31/08/2026	Unity Trust	Service Charge	£ 7.00

Payments Received

Date	Payee	Description	Amount

Cash Book Balance on 18/09/2026

£ 32,766.80

Bank Balances on 18/09/2026

Unity Trust Bank	£	7,507.96
Unity Trust Reserve Account	£	25,258.84

£ 32,766.80

Less Unpresented Cheques/Direct Debits

£ -

Adjustment

Reconciled Total

£ 32,766.80

Payments to be made

Date	Payee	Description	Amount
28/09/2026	Salaries	Salaries	£ 587.87
28/09/2026	Clerk Expenses	WFH, Council Phone	£ 32.90
28/09/2026	Salaries	Locum Salary and Expenses	£ 169.20
28/09/2026	HMRC	HMRC	£ 25.63
29/10/2026	CloudNext	Domain	£ 60.00
30/10/2026	CloudNext	Website Hosting	£ 119.98
28/09/2026	PKF Littlejohn	Audit	£ 252.00

Cash Book Balance After Payments £ 31,519.22

Appendix III

The Salings Parish Council

Budget Monitoring Report September 2026

INCOME

	Actual 31 March 2026	Budget 31st March 2027	To Date 18 September 2026	Percentage	Note
Precept	20,076.00	21,666.00	10,833.00	50%	
BDC Street Cleaning	1,363.91	1,324.18	1,404.83	106%	
Clerks Bursary	650.00				
Investment Income	536.63	400.00	122.21	31%	
VAT Repayment	1,388.25				Please see VAT owed below*
Playing Field Hire	1,122.00				
Grants received	2,000.00		97.74		
Development Fighting Fund			5,000.00		Contribution from Shalford PC, Rayne PC, and Private Contribution
S106 money					
Misc Income	700.89				
TOTAL	27,837.68	23,390.18	17,457.78		
EXPENDITURE					
Street Lighting	317.33	450.00	93.68	21%	
Parks and Open Spaces	2,758.03	4,000.00	981.75	25%	
Grass Cutting	1,850.00	3,000.00	1,055.00	35%	
Trees	200.00	500.00	400.00	80%	
Audit Fees	220.00	600.00	220.00	37%	
Hall Hire	102.00	500.00	255.00	51%	
Insurances	588.24	650.00	503.90	78%	
Salaries	8,656.34	8,000.00	4,064.22	51%	
Clerks Expenses	594.58	650.00	269.41	41%	
Stationery, Postage, Printing & Payroll	201.93	250.00	143.19	57%	
Subscriptions	444.93	480.00	394.69	82%	
Website	297.96	320.00		0%	
Defibrillator	267.00	400.00	225.48	56%	
Equipment maintenance	0.00	100.00		0%	
Training	0.00	500.00	234.00	47%	
Grants	114.50	1,000.00	160.91	16%	
Neighbourhood Plan	1,450.00	1,500.00	1,200.00	80%	
Chairmans Allowance	43.52	250.00	7.91	3%	
Village Improvements	30.00	3,500.00	175.00	5%	
Community Garden	3,826.53	2,273.47	421.00	19%	
Local Plan Review Technical Fees	0.00	5,500.00	10,500.00	191%	£2500 to TH Transport £8000 to Keating Chambers SPC contributed £5,500, remainder paid from grants
TOTAL	21,962.89	34,423.47	21,305.14	62%	
Surplus /Deficit	5,874.79		-3,847.36		
Balance in Accounts	38,755.96		34,908.60		

Reserves		
Development Fighting Fund	(EMR)	0
Play Equipment	(EMR)	3500
Trees	(EMR)	3500
Electronic Equipment	(EMR)	800
Election	(EMR)	500
Neighbourhood Plan	(EMR)	7000
Community Garden	(EMR)	0
General Reserves		15482.49
Total		30,782.49

VAT Reconciliation TO DATE £ 2,141.80 *
Balance in Accounts minus above £ 32,766.80