

SUTTON PARISH COUNCIL
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DRAFT MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

held on Tuesday 21 July 2026 at 7.00 pm
at St Michael & All Angels' Church, Nene Way, Sutton

Present	Cllr Peter Lee (Chairman), Cllr Antony Eager, Cllr Dr Michael Caskey (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Martyn Parker and Cllr Mick Grange.
Also present	Tony Henthorn, Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer.
Members of the public	None.
Meeting opened	7.00 pm.

26/018 Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence were received. All five serving members of the Council were present.

Members asked that Simon Scriven should receive agendas and minutes as a matter of course and that the Clerk should check that Gavin Elsey continued to receive invitations and relevant Council correspondence.

Action: Clerk to update and verify the circulation list.

26/019 Declarations of Interest

Resolved: No declarations of interest were made.

26/020 Approval of Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 19 May 2026

The draft minutes were reviewed page by page. Members confirmed the following appointments and representative arrangements:

- Anne Grange – Neighbourhood Watch representative;
- Anne Grange – Sutton Lands Trust representative;
- Cllr Peter Lee and Cllr Mick Grange – Parish Council representatives on the Sutton Neighbourhood Plan Group, with other councillors welcome to participate where appropriate;
- Cllr Peter Lee – CAPALC liaison representative; and
- Chairman and/or another councillor – attendance at any future Peterborough parish council liaison meetings.

Resolved: Subject to the above amendments and clarification of planning application 26/002108/CLE, the Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 19 May 2026 were approved as a true and accurate record. Proposed by Cllr Dr Michael Caskey and seconded by Cllr Mick Grange.

26/021 Matters Arising / Clerk's Update

Members considered the Actions Arising Report introduced following the May meeting. The Council agreed that it should replace the former separate spreadsheet and operate as a continuing record of outstanding and completed actions.

The report will identify the councillor or officer responsible for each action wherever possible. A first version will be issued promptly after each meeting, followed by an updated version with the next agenda papers.

Resolved: The Actions Arising Report was adopted as the Council's rolling action-management document.

Action: Clerk to issue Version 1 after each meeting and Version 2 with the following meeting papers.

26/021.1 Unity Trust Bank Transition

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The Clerk reported that the Unity Trust Bank account had been opened and the migration had progressed quickly. Most councillors had been added to the mandate; Cllr Dr Michael Caskey remained to be added as an authorised signatory.

Members reviewed the first electronic payment process and identified that the current settings appeared to allow the officer initiating a transaction to count as one of the required authorities. The Council agreed that payment controls must ensure genuine separation of duties.

For future Clerk salary payments, the Clerk will supply the salary information to the Chairman, who will initiate the payment, with a second councillor providing the separate authorisation.

The preferred automated transfer from HSBC could not initially proceed because Unity required two signatories common to both bank mandates. The Clerk agreed to recheck whether Cllr Mick Grange remained an HSBC signatory. In the meantime, the intended alternative was to transfer £15,000 by three cheques of £5,000, retaining a small balance in HSBC until all remaining direct debits and standing instructions had been identified and transferred.

Members confirmed that the Unity account details could now be issued for incoming payments, including allotment income.

Resolved: The Council endorsed completion of the migration to Unity Trust Bank, subject to the Clerk confirming dual-authorisation settings and retaining sufficient funds in HSBC until all legacy transactions had cleared.

Action: Clerk to add Cllr Caskey to the mandate, review the dual-authorisation configuration, recheck HSBC signatories and complete the phased transfer.

26/021.2 Governance Review Programme 2026–2028

Members considered the proposed two-year programme of governance documents. The Council supported a structured approach but asked that the schedule distinguish clearly between documents that are legally required, documents required by proper practice and those representing local best practice.

The Clerk explained that draft documents would ordinarily be adapted from established NALC, SLCC, local authority or other parish council templates rather than written entirely from scratch. Members favoured a small working arrangement whereby draft policies could be reviewed and refined outside the formal meeting before being presented for adoption.

The Council questioned whether the Financial Regulations required a complete annual review, noting that they had been reviewed during the previous year. The Clerk agreed to confirm the applicable requirement before finalising the programme.

Members agreed that no more than one or two governance documents should normally be presented at any meeting and that priority should be given to documents required by law or proper practice.

Resolved: The Governance Review Programme was approved in principle, subject to clarification of mandatory review frequencies and amendment of the priority classifications.

Action: Clerk to revise the programme and circulate the first draft documents in advance of the September meeting.

26/021.3 Insurance and Asset Review

Members noted that the Asset Register required updating and should be reconciled with the Council's current insurance schedule. Assets discussed included outdoor equipment, machinery, marquees, chairs, tables and other items stored in the Reading Room.

The Council agreed that insured items with an identifiable value should normally appear in the Asset Register and that ownership should be clarified where village, church, Sutton 49s and Parish Council interests overlapped.

Members also discussed the need for a more structured inspection of trees on Council-managed land. The Chairman agreed to approach Stephen Chesney-Beales to establish whether he could undertake or assist with an appropriate inspection.

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Resolved: A full Asset Register and insurance reconciliation will be undertaken during 2026/27.

Action: Chairman to contact Stephen Chesney-Beales regarding tree inspection; Clerk and councillors to compile and verify the updated asset list.

26/021.4 Sutton Email Distribution List

Members discussed establishing a Council email circulation list alongside the existing village announcements WhatsApp group. It was recognised that not all residents use WhatsApp or online platforms and that alternative means of communication should remain available.

The Council noted the need to obtain consent before adding personal email addresses and to establish appropriate data protection and communications arrangements before wider use.

Pending development of the list, statutory notices will continue to be displayed on the village noticeboard and minutes and agendas will be restored to the existing website.

Resolved: The Council supported the development of a consent-based parish email distribution list.

Action: Clerk to prepare a compliant sign-up process and restore current agendas and minutes to the website.

26/021.5 Annual Meeting Calendar

Members reviewed the proposed dates and confirmed that ordinary meetings would normally be held at 7.00 pm on alternate-month Tuesdays at St Michael & All Angels' Church.

- Tuesday 15 September 2026;
- Tuesday 17 November 2026;
- Tuesday 19 January 2027;
- Tuesday 16 March 2027; and
- Tuesday 18 May 2027, incorporating the Annual Meeting of the Council.

Resolved: The meeting calendar for the remainder of 2026/27 was approved.

Action: Clerk to send electronic calendar invitations and publish the dates on the website and noticeboard.

26/022 Website, Email and Digital Services Review

Members reviewed the condition of the current VisionICT website and agreed that outdated and inaccurate material required urgent correction. Particular priorities included councillor and Clerk details, removal of the former Clerk vacancy information, publication of current agendas and minutes, and clear reciprocal links with the Sutton Neighbourhood Plan website.

The Clerk outlined the experience of Helpston and Maxey Parish Councils with Somerset Web Services and the potential benefits of a modern, accessible platform, improved governance document management and possible Google Workspace integration.

Members considered that the future purpose and design of the website required further thought and would benefit from a small working group, potentially involving people with relevant experience outside the Council. The Neighbourhood Plan website and existing local expertise should be considered before any final migration decision.

The immediate priority was to restore accurate information and statutory documents to the existing website while options were assessed.

Resolved: The Council agreed to explore a transfer to Somerset Web Services and to establish a small website working group before committing to the final scope and implementation.

Action: Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman, to obtain a quotation and implementation information, correct urgent content on the existing website and convene a small working group.

26/023 Recreation Field, Village Assets and Parish Habitat

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Members received an update on the annual wildflower survey, which had been completed at no cost by Sophie Roth of Nene Park Trust and a Trust volunteer. The survey continued the Council's year-on-year record of habitat and species development.

A councillor reported that work was under way to convert the survey information into material suitable for the website and a possible information board at the recreation field.

Maintenance by Nurture at the recreation ground and new churchyard was now taking place at approximately two-week intervals and was reported to be satisfactory. Aragon continued to undertake strimming in the closed churchyard under the City Council's arrangements.

Members noted a gradual increase in recorded species and wider wildlife use of the area.

The annual play and amenity inspection remained in place. The Chairman agreed to check the likely inspection timing so that the associated invoice could be anticipated.

Fly-tipping and similar highway or environmental issues should normally be reported through FixMyStreet. Members agreed that the website should make this route clear to residents. An existing fly-tipping report near the roundabout had been challenged after it was incorrectly closed on land-ownership grounds.

Resolved: The updates were noted, and the Council supported publicising the habitat survey and FixMyStreet reporting arrangements.

Action: Chairman to confirm the annual inspection timing; relevant councillor to continue pursuing the fly-tipping report; Clerk to add a FixMyStreet link to the website.

26/024 Highways, Traffic and A47 Matters

26/024.1 A47 Update

Members reviewed the continuing campaign and the relationship between the Parish Council website, the dedicated A47 material and other local information channels. The Council considered it important that information remained current, linked and capable of being maintained over time.

The wider A47 campaign funds and associated records will be incorporated into the financial review so that their status and future use are transparent.

Resolved: The update was noted.

26/024.2 Cycle West / Non-Motorised User Routes

Cllr Grange reported that he had contacted Andrew Nash. Nene Park Trust was now taking a greater role in reviewing the route and was considering amendments intended to make the proposals more acceptable to the village.

The work included reconsideration of the proposed cattle-grid arrangements and other practical details. The Council would continue to engage through the relevant cluster meetings and Nene Park Trust contacts.

Resolved: The update was noted and continued liaison was supported.

26/024.3 Speeding and Road Safety Concerns

Members continued to note local speeding and road-safety concerns. No new formal resolution was required at this meeting.

Resolved: The position was noted.

26/025 Neighbourhood Plan Update

The Chairman reported that a written update had been prepared by Simon and would be circulated to members and provided to the Clerk for inclusion in the Council's records.

Progress remained limited because of uncertainty surrounding the Peterborough Local Plan, local government reorganisation and national planning changes. The Group was continuing preparatory work, including policy and evidence review, but acknowledged that the value and practical influence of completing the Neighbourhood Plan remained under consideration.

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Members noted that housing-land-supply decisions continued to weaken the effect of local planning policies. The Group would maintain its evidence base and monitor potential development proposals affecting the parish.

Resolved: The report was noted. The Neighbourhood Plan Group will continue preparatory and monitoring work while awaiting greater policy certainty.

Action: Chairman to forward the written update to the Clerk and councillors.

26/026 Finance

26/026.1 Quarter 1 Accounts and Financial Position

The Clerk presented the Quarter 1 Finance Report for the period 1 April to 30 June 2026. Members noted:

- payments of £4,845.65;
- receipts of £6,678.74; and
- a bank balance of £16,563.99 at 30 June 2026.

Resolved: The Quarter 1 receipts, payments and bank balance were received and noted.

26/026.2 Budget Monitoring and Financial Strategy

The Clerk advised that the latest identifiable detailed budget dated from 2023/24 and did not provide an adequate basis for meaningful current-year variance reporting. The Council had historically operated through broad precept increases and separately identified project funds, but the Clerk did not yet have a complete and reliable schedule of those funds.

Members agreed that the Council required a clearer annual budget, a schedule of earmarked or separately held funds, and a medium-term view of planned expenditure. This was particularly important in light of possible land-sale income and future projects.

Cllr Mick Grange agreed to help locate and explain historic spreadsheets and supporting information. The Chairman also wished to participate in the preparatory discussion.

Resolved: A detailed 2026/27 budget position, schedule of earmarked funds and initial medium-term financial strategy will be prepared for the September meeting.

Action: Clerk, Chairman and Cllr Grange to hold a preparatory finance session before the September meeting.

26/026.3 Banking Arrangements and Authorised Signatories

The banking position was considered under minute 26/021.1 above.

Resolved: Completion of the Unity Trust Bank migration was endorsed.

26/026.4 Clerk Expenses and Administrative Arrangements

Members noted that the Clerk Expenses Governance Framework had been approved at the May meeting and no further decision was required.

26/026.5 Earmarked and Separately Identified Funds

Members discussed the need to identify clearly the purpose, balance and governance of funds associated with the A47 campaign, Neighbourhood Plan, allotments, reserves and Sutton 49s.

The Council noted that VAT recoveries and project expenditure must be allocated consistently so that grant-funded and restricted expenditure remained auditable.

The Sutton 49s lottery was currently inactive and accumulated funds were being held temporarily by the church. Members considered that any future transfer into Parish Council banking arrangements would need a clear audit trail, separate identification and agreed governance. A future community group or trustees might be required to determine expenditure and any restart of the lottery.

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Resolved: No Sutton 49s funds will be transferred to the Parish Council until appropriate accounting, governance and decision-making arrangements have been agreed.

Action: Include all separately identified funds in the September finance review.

26/027 Planning Applications

26/002609/CTR – Lime tree at Raithby Lodge, Manor Road, Sutton PE5 7XG: remove to ground level on health and safety grounds.

Members considered the condition and location of the tree and noted that it appeared to be in severe decline. The application documentation was considered unclear regarding the precise location and applicant details.

Resolved: The Council raised no objection to application 26/002609/CTR.

26/028 Planning Decisions

26/002247/LBC – Manor Farm, Manor Road, Sutton: removal of an existing rear enclosed porch and replacement with an orangery-style extension.

Members noted that Peterborough City Council had refused the application. The Council expressed surprise at the decision, which appeared to follow conservation advice.

Resolved: The planning decision was noted.

26/029 Correspondence

Members noted an invitation to parish councillors to attend an update on the John Clare Countryside Project at Sacrewell Farm on Monday 24 August 2026, from 6.30 pm to 8.00 pm.

The Council discussed the growing profile of the project and its potential relevance to the protection of countryside and planning around the village. Councillors intending to attend were asked to report back at the next meeting.

Action: Attending councillors to report to the September meeting.

26/030 Village Events and Community Activities

The Council formally recorded its thanks to Cllr Martyn Parker and Denise for organising the recent village event, which had been well received.

The event enabled the village's three marquees, approximately forty chairs and three trestle tables to be inspected and used. Members noted that the equipment was serviceable and should be included in the wider asset and ownership review.

No details of any future event were announced at this stage.

Resolved: The Council's thanks to Martyn and Denise were recorded.

26/031 Public Forum

No members of the public were present and no matters were raised.

26/032 Exclusion of the Press and Public

The Chairman explained that the following item included matters relating to ongoing land, tenancy and legal negotiations.

Resolved: In accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public were excluded for the following item because publicity would have been prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

26/033 Confidential – Allotments and Grazing Arrangements

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The Council received updates on the proposed South Allotment grazing tenancy, boundary fencing associated with an adjoining land transaction, progress with legal documentation and the proposed water connection for the North Allotment.

The prospective South Allotment tenant was expected to take occupation from 1 August 2026, with the annual rent apportioned to 31 March 2027. Final documentation and Unity Trust Bank payment details would be supplied.

Members agreed in principle to make a contribution equivalent to £250 towards necessary boundary fencing by reducing the contribution to the Council's legal costs from £500 to £250.

Members noted continuing delay in obtaining a practical water-connection quotation for the North Allotment. The relevant utility provider had been supplied with information on anticipated water use and an existing connection point. The tenant was being kept informed.

Resolved: The tenancy arrangements and the £250 fencing contribution mechanism were approved in principle, subject to completion of the relevant legal and administrative documentation.

Action: Relevant councillor to provide the Clerk with the signed tenancy documentation; Chairman to continue the legal process; water-connection enquiries to continue.

26/034 Date of Next Meeting

Resolved: The next ordinary meeting of Sutton Parish Council will be held on Tuesday 15 September 2026 at 7.00 pm at St Michael & All Angels' Church, Nene Way, Sutton.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.20 pm.

Signed:	
Date:	

These minutes remain in draft form until approved by Sutton Parish Council.