

St. James South Elmham
Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting
held on 26 November 2024 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall

Committee Members present: Mr C. Bradley (Chair)
Mr B. Crockford, Mrs A. Dinsdale, Mr M Graham,

6 Residents of the village

1. Welcome.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, with a reminder that it was the annual Precept setting meeting.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from: Mr A Hadingham, Mrs M Henry, Mr D Ritchie, Mrs L. Bradley, Mrs C Rodbourne

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes had been published on the parish noticeboard, and copies were available to read at the meeting. Mrs A Dinsdale then read a precis of the minutes.

Acceptance of the minutes, proposed by Mr B Crockford, seconded by Mrs G Banns, approved unanimously and signed by the Chairman.

4. Matters Arising

Any matters arising were covered by appropriate agenda items.

5. Chairman's Report

Waste activities at The Cottage and Laurel Farm had resulted in an enforcement order being issued on 11th January 2023 by Suffolk County Council. Activities had continued and expanded since the enforcement notice. The SCC legal team were still working on aspects of the case and a decision on enforcement was expected in the near future.

There had been no other planning matters.

The Village Green Conveyancing of the site to the Parish Meeting had completed earlier in the year. We were now looking at continuing to improve the site and facilities, and properly maintain the green. A new Mark Goldsworthy sign had been installed (similar to those he carved for the Orchard and the Wood). The Orchard crew have been cutting the Green's grass and edgings – thanks to them. Much dead growth in Sheet Field Wood and along the long boundary hedge been removed and stacked ready for removal and Mr R Hadingham had trimmed the eastern hedge back to inhibit its spread across the field. The Chairman thanked those involved.

Infrastructure Projects The paper produced setting out our plans for infrastructure projects in St James, supported by the Meeting, was accepted by ESC and the CIL funds, approximately £6,250, released. Work had begun on several of them:

Telephone Kiosk Refurbishment A huge amount of work (Mr Joseph Thurston and family, Mr Peter Crockford) had been done to clean out the old glass and 90-year-old putty. The body of the kiosk had been sand-blasted and sprayed red along with the

letter box, and the village pump sprayed green. A large order of authentic replacement parts had been made & delivered.

Village Hall Landscaping Connected with the above, plans for re-landscaping the hedge and area surrounding the kiosk and village pump have been developed.

Field Utilities (Water and Electricity supplies) The cost of extending these to the Hall meadow had increased prohibitively. Plans had been modified to providing external supplies from Kitchen end of the Hall

Orchard Benches Three new benches for orchard had been ordered and concrete bases laid ready for delivery and installation.

Village Website The Chairman and Mrs Banns had been working with our site developer on overall design and on producing content. The Orchard website will be progressively combined with the village website.

6. Village Reports

The Chairman then invited short reports from representatives from the Church (PCC), the Village Hall and the Village Orchard.

Church Mr Crockford said there was continued concern about poor attendances nationally which was mirrored locally. The PCC was grateful for the work of the volunteers during 2024 and for the support from Mrs Jane Bastow. Financially, the proceeds from the now-ceased annual St James book sale were still being missed. Preparations were being made for the Carol Service – to which all were welcome.

Village Hall Mrs Bradley had provided an update on Village Hall activities which the Chairman presented. The Village Hall committee had begun to return to events traditionally held pre-pandemic. So far music nights had been held for which thanks to Mr D Jewson, and a Quiz in October. A Christmas wreath-making workshop is being held and booking had proved so popular that other craft workshops would be offered in the coming year. The traditional Christmas Lunch would be held on Sunday 8th December. Planning for 2025 events was already under way. The Hall Committee was very grateful to the Z Team of volunteers who had completely refurbished the hall storage shed and carried out ground maintenance around the Hall. Planning for another storage shed and improvements to other facilities to upgrade the Hall offerings was in hand.

Orchard The Chairman reported that the Orchard was beginning to mature and yield a good and varied fruit crop. Maintenance of the meadow had continued regularly throughout the year and the hut had been repainted and its window repaired. Repairs to the fencing and gate posts at the Orchard entrance would be started in the near future.

7. Precept for the Year ending 31 March 2026

The Chairman reminded the meeting of the Precept setting process in providing for funds for use within and for the village, collected with council tax payments. He introduced a mid-year Receipts and Expenditure Account for the period to 14th November 2024 to illustrate the typical uses the Precept funds.

The 2024 -25 Precept was £2,402.40. The policy continued to be careful and ensure we were able to meet operating costs, including likely the impact of inflation, cost increases, one-off items e.g. legal fees, and to have a moderate reserve for unexpected items and risks, or to support new parish events and projects. The current inflation rate was approx. 2.5%.

Committee had discussed this and concluded that we should increase the precept using current inflation number as a guide. The recommendation, therefore, was to increase the

precept for 2025/26 by 2.5%. This was proposed by Mr B Crockford, seconded by Jon Santillo and agreed unanimously.

8. Other Business

The Chairman expressed his thanks to all those who continued to look out for and help those in the village who needed assistance or support. On behalf of the village, he also thanked those volunteers, individuals and groups, who help take care of the village: verges, paths, green areas, hedges, ditches, in the churchyard, in the orchard, for the Hall: their efforts in improving and keeping the village running were much appreciated.

He also expressed thanks for the support and help given by the Committee Members, Mrs B. Crockford, Mrs M. Henry and her stand-in for the evening, Mr M. Graham.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.17 pm

ADDENDUM

Greshaw Green Enclosure Trustees Charity The Committee now changed rôle to be the Chairman and Trustees of the Greshaw Green Inclosure (the Orchard field) and report to the Parish Meeting.

Mr C. Bradley reminded the meeting of the purpose of the Greshaw Green Trust and how the funds were used. If it were thought that anyone in the village might benefit from help, support or recognition from the Trust or volunteer help from within the village, residents should talk, in complete confidence, to one of the Trustees.

The funds available currently stood at £2,229.08. One donation had been made during the past 6 months.