



Administrative contact: clerk@holbrookparishcouncil.gov.uk

Telephone No: 07853007280

Notes of the Meeting held at Holbrook Village Hall, between members of Shotley Peninsula Parish Council Alliance and personnel from Babergh and MidSuffolk District Council on Tuesday 22nd September 2026 at 2.00 p.m. and attended by a Customer Liaison officer from SCC Highways Department.

Present:

Babergh DC:

Robert Hobbs, Corporate Manager of Strategic Planning BMSDC (RH)

Phil Isbell, Chief Planning Officer, Babergh & MidSuffolk DC (PI)

Laura Butters, Community Grants and Development Manager (LB)

Dee O'Rourke, Director of Place (DO)

Peninsular Alliance:

John Ambrose, Chair Holbrook Parish Council (JA)

Rachel Belcher-Nairn, Clerk Tattingstone Parish Council (RB-N)

Rosemary Gravell, Chelmondiston Parish Council (RG)

Jo Hazlewood, Clerk Holbrook Parish Council & Freston Parish Council (JH)

Mike Hems, Chair Stutton Parish Council (MH)

Simon Pearce, Woolverstone Parish Council (SP)

Sue Scott, Chair, Wherstead Parish Council (SS)

Geoff Mayhew, Harkstead Parish Council (GM)

SCC Highways (from 2.30)

Josh White (JW)

Apologies from: Arthur Charvonia CEO Babergh & Mid-Suffolk DC (AC), Robin Coates Wherstead Parish Council (RC), Russell Ross- Smith Chair Freston PC (RR-S), Matthew March Chair Woolverstone PC (MM)

1. Welcome and Introductions: JA welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Action points from meeting held on 12th March::

(a) Flooding on The Strand To pursue ongoing flooding issues on The Strand with the County Councillor and relevant portfolio holder. **Ongoing.**

(b) County Transport Strategy A summary of the County Transport Strategy was to be circulated to members by Robert Hobbs. RH confirmed that the Strategy has been circulated and is also available on the website.

(c) Safety, Disruption and Congestion – Jimmy’s Farm Events AC had offered to follow up concerns regarding safety, disruption and congestion caused by special events at Jimmy’s Farm. Babergh members agreed to check progress. SS reported that congestion remains an ongoing issue at the site.

(d) Peninsula or Area Policies in the Joint Local Plan A query was raised regarding whether Peninsula or Area Policies could be incorporated into the Joint Local Plan. RH advised that he is currently scoping what may be included but emphasised that any policies would need to be supported by robust evidence.

3. Update on the Call for Sites and Joint Local Plan (JLP) RH reported that the regulations published in March were based on the existing district geographies at that time. With Local Government Reorganisation now withdrawn, Babergh and Mid Suffolk will proceed with a single BMSDC Local Plan. Evidence for the plan is being shared across Suffolk.

The Call for Sites consultation received 1,146 responses. JA said that Holbrook Parish Council had not found the consultation particularly user-friendly but had nevertheless submitted a Council response.

RH explained that the team is now reviewing the scale and types of housing required, with planning up to 2045. A draft Local Plan is expected in 2027, followed by public consultation, with the aim of producing a final plan in 2028. RH outlined three key “gateways” in the process:

1. Assessing readiness to begin plan-making
2. Testing whether the emerging plan is deliverable following consultation
3. Scoping the vision and developing locally-specific policies

JA highlighted that the main concern for villages is which sites will ultimately be allocated. MH asked whether feedback would be provided on the red/amber/green assessments of submitted sites. RH confirmed that each site will receive a detailed assessment. The final plan is expected to be approved in 2029.

RH also noted that the NPPF contains national decision-making policies which must be read alongside the Local Plan.

PI commented that the housing market is currently subdued and emphasised the need for sustainable development and supporting infrastructure.

Babergh encouraged parishes to progress their Neighbourhood Plans, noting that the updated NPPF places greater emphasis on community engagement, which should help to ensure developers engage more effectively with local communities.

4. Update on the Withdrawal of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and Next Steps

DO confirmed that there is currently **no LGR proposal** for Suffolk, Norfolk, Essex or Hampshire; all proposals have been withdrawn. Other areas have been paused. A new formal decision from the Secretary of State will be required, and no timetable has been announced.

District elections will proceed in May 2027. Any future LGR process would need to begin afresh and may differ from previous proposals.

JA expressed concern that local issues could be overlooked in any future unitary arrangement, reflecting earlier worries from parishes about reduced meaningful engagement in the event of there being a single unitary council.

DO confirmed that the Devolution agenda continues, with a new White Paper expected in the autumn.

5. Proposed Wind Turbine at Ipswich Docks

ABP is undertaking a consultation exercise in Ipswich and Wherstead. SS reported that dates have now been confirmed.

If the scheme progresses, a **full** Environmental Impact Assessment will be required. The majority of attendees at the recent Wherstead public meeting were opposed to the development.

6. Other Planning Matters

PI outlined forthcoming changes to the National Scheme of Delegation, intended to standardise planning functions nationally. These changes are due to come into force at the end of **October 2026**. There are two scheduled proposed by the government :

- **Schedule 1:** Applications that must be determined by planning officers in all cases.
- **Schedule 2:** Applications presumed to be officer-decided unless specific referral tests are met and senior decision-makers agree they should go to committee.

Local Area Network Committees / Shotley Peninsula Alliance of Parish Councils

It was agreed that meetings between the Alliance and Babergh should be a two-way process, with clear priorities established for all parties.

MH asked whether these meetings were useful for BMSDC and what improvements could be made. DO confirmed that Babergh found them valuable and were considering similar arrangements with other local networks.

Holbrook Neighbourhood Plan – Green Space Query

JA raised a question regarding a designated green space in Holbrook's NP, which is currently used as a tree nursery. The designation was made without consultation with the landowner, who had not been identified at the time. The owner wishes to build an eco-house set back from the road.

RH and PI advised that designated green spaces carry significant protection, and any proposal for development would be challenging.

7. Climate Emergency and Local Resilience

JA reported concerns from Holbrook PC's working group regarding SCC's "undeclared" climate emergency, and asked whether the Alliance might consider a joint approach to building local resilience.

GM noted positive engagement between local farmers, the NFU and the fire service, enabling access to farm water supplies. He emphasised the need to rethink water management, with substantial work already underway behind the scenes.

DO confirmed that Babergh's position on the climate emergency remains unchanged.

SP suggested that parishes can take small practical steps, such as replacing felled trees and creating wildlife habitats. He agreed to circulate Woolverstone's statement on the Climate & Wildlife Emergency.

PI, RH and DO left the meeting.

8. Peninsula Sports Centre

JA reported that free **pickleball sessions** are running on Saturdays from 1.00–3.30 pm. There has been no further update from Abbeycroft or the School regarding wider opening hours.

LB reported that Abbeycroft is interested in further development of the site and is working with the School.

GM noted that Holbrook Tennis Club had previously relocated due to the courts being unfit for purpose, and that there would be strong support for new courts at the Sports Centre. A padel court was also mentioned.

LB highlighted safeguarding concerns relating to access. She confirmed that padel courts would be eligible for district CIL funding, which can support new or extended facilities but not refurbishment.

SS reported that Suffolk Food Hall has plans for privately-owned padel courts.

SP asked whether funding might be available for Woolverstone FC, whose progression through the leagues requires upgraded facilities.

9. Highways Issues

JW introduced himself as part of SCC Highways' Customer Liaison Team and outlined his role.

SP expressed thanks for Highways' support and for the County Councillors' assistance in progressing the proposed 40 mph limit between Woolverstone and Chelmondiston, funded by the previous councillor's highways budget.

JW noted that SCC now has a more generous policy on 20 mph limits in villages. Crash data remains key to any change, though anecdotal evidence and speed survey data will also be considered.

Stutton's recent road safety review used evidence from Community SpeedWatch and speed signs. MH reported that their own survey identified several simple issues, such as poor visibility of signs and overgrown hedges. JW had attended site meetings and provided excellent support. Additional funding is still being sought to implement solutions.

RG asked who is responsible for maintaining signs. JW confirmed:

- Highways replace damaged warning signs.
- Name signs and repeater signs may not be replaced.
- Highways do **not** clean signs; this can be done by Community Self Help Groups

Councils should report defects via the reporting tool and may contact JW for support.

GM asked whether the Alliance could promote a 40 mph limit across the peninsula. JW advised that this would not meet national policy and would require a change in national law.

Road Closures

Road closures are managed by the Network Assurance Team. Concerns were raised about inaccurate signage and unsuitable country lanes being used instead of designated diversions. JW confirmed that diversions must be signed on roads of equivalent status, although it was noted that New Lane between Woolverstone and Holbrook was recently used for a bus diversion.

Road Safety – Freston Hill / Freston Crossroads

There is a significant increase in traffic. SP said that planning permission for Admirals Quarter in Holbrook was granted on the basis that improvements would follow once all the houses were built in Shotley, but it appears that no action will be taken until a further 100+ houses are built.

SS raised an issue in Wherstead affecting children walking to school. JW suggested white lines may help.

10. Anglian Water

MH reported that Stutton has experienced four mains bursts in five years, largely due to old asbestos pipes. Replacement is local policy, but no date has been provided. Recent road closures were chaotic, though parishes now have a named Anglian Water contact for such incidents.

A planned road closure at RHS is scheduled from 28 September to end of November. Councils expressed disappointment at the lack of consultation and customer service from Anglian Water.

There is currently no replacement bus service between Stutton and Holbrook, affecting school children and residents travelling to Ipswich or Manningtree. JW suggested contacting Simon Barnett (Passenger Transport Team) for advice.

11. Next Meeting: date to be scheduled in January 2027