

SEDGEFORD ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

WEDNESDAY MARCH 18th 2026 AT 18.30
AT THE VILLAGE HALL, JARVIE CLOSE

1. WELCOME: Ms Crump welcomed all in attendance to the meeting.

PUBLIC: There were 6 parishioners present (this includes Parish Councillors) plus Cllr Parish. Apology received from Cllr Coleman

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS: None

3. THE CHAIR'S ANNUAL REPORT:

Drafting this report shortly before the Annual Parish Meeting, it is hard to ignore the global situation and its potential impact on all of us.

Apart from the political and security concerns, there are the effects, direct and indirect, on the cost of living. There is uncertainty about the price and availability of fuel and of certain imported goods.

There might be little we can do to influence these wider political and economic decisions, but we can at least have some impact on the quality of life of Sedgeford's residents and those who work in the village.

As we explain in the next six-monthly bulletin, the Parish Council has a very small budget with correspondingly limited roles and responsibilities. As income, the Parish receives a small percentage of the Council Tax, which covers most of our expenses and pays the salary of our part-time clerk. We also have access to Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) money from local development, to spend on infrastructure projects. Nonetheless the cost of some goods and services has increased, placing greater demands than ever on our budget.

For 2025, we reviewed our objectives and priorities for the year, as part of the annual budget-setting. The clerk, on our behalf, was very successful in obtaining grants and negotiating contracts to make best use of our resources.

Key achievements for the year included:

Negotiating contracts for grass cutting and dog litter bin emptying, including obtaining a new bin free of charge.

Obtaining CIL funding towards a new boiler, replacement hand dryers and replacement of part of the playground surface at the Village Hall.

Drawing up a tree management policy and tree risk assessments for the trees the PC is responsible for and ensuring the necessary work was carried out to keep everyone safe.

Providing improvements to the part of the cemetery that the PC is responsible for.

Engaging in discussions with Anglian Water and the Environment Agency on behalf of the village regarding the river Heacham.

Planting new saplings to improve biodiversity.

Last but not least, reviewing and commenting on planning applications.

The most significant of these has been the application to develop the former school site on Ringstead Road. As previously reported, in the newsletter and elsewhere, wide-ranging objections were made to the initial plans drawn up by Repton Homes. These included concerns about parking, the number of homes proposed and the provision of genuinely affordable housing. Although the plans have now been amended, the PC continues to express serious reservations about these proposals. In the meantime, discussions with Broadland Housing Association continue.

Discussion of planning applications takes place in context of our Neighbourhood Plan. While aware that we need to review and update the existing plan, this would be a major undertaking. Because of the likely changes to local authority structure proposed by the Government and their possible implications for Neighbourhood Plans, we decided in 2025 just to make some initial enquiries and maintain a watching brief.

In 2025 we welcomed Sue Maddox to the Council. She is monitoring local plans and contributing to the six-monthly PC Reports. These were introduced as part of a strategy to improve communications between the PC and Sedgeford residents. We would like to see more people involved in village projects and activities and hope that some might in future consider volunteering or standing for election to the PC.

I'd like to thank Roger, our Clerk, and all our Councillors for their work during the past year, whether this has been planting trees, clearing litter, applying for grants or 'simply' attending meetings.

4. ANY FURTHER REPORTS OR ITEMS RAISED FOR DISCUSSION AS RAISED BY THE PARISHIONERS:

Cllr Ward raised a point from a resident about exploring the movement of the 30mph speed sign on the Snettisham Road back to beyond the access road to the north side of the road. This matter will be taken to the next council meeting in April.

The Meeting Closed at 6.40pm