

Kesgrave Town Council

Annual Town Council Meeting Minutes

Date: Monday 11 May 2026 Time: 7.15pm Location: Council Chamber, Town Council Office

Attendance

Councillors: Neal Beecroft-Smith (Chair) Rod Gibson (Vice Chair), Geoff Lynch, Alastair Cook, Dr John Ling, Jonathan Ogden, and Avtar Athwall.

Officers: Joanna Abbott (Town Clerk), Jennie Catling (Events & Estate Manager)

Also Present: Alistair Jeffreys (County Councillor/Member of the Public).

Fire Safety Preamble: The Chair provided standard fire evacuation instructions, noting no planned tests for the evening.

1. Election of Chair and Declaration of Acceptance of Office – Cllr Beecroft-Smith was proposed by a Member and seconded.

Resolved: To elect Cllr Beecroft-Smith as Chair for the 2026/27 municipal year. The Declaration of Acceptance of Office will be signed at the meeting's conclusion.

2. Election of Vice Chair and Declaration of Acceptance of Office – Cllr Gibson was nominated and seconded.

Resolved: To elect Cllr Gibson as Vice Chair for the 2026/27 municipal year. The Declaration of Acceptance of Office will be signed at the meeting's conclusion.

3. Welcome and Apologies for Absence – Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Comber and Ward, and the RFO.

Resolved: To accept all three apologies, reason – personal.

4. Declarations of Interest – No interests were declared by Cllrs Ogden, Gibson, Lynch, Ling, Athwall, Cook, or Beecroft-Smith. Members were reminded to update their East Suffolk Council register of interests.

5. Appointment of Committee Members – A proposal was made for all Councillors to sit on every committee to ensure quorums are met.

Resolved: To appoint all Councillors as members of every Council committee. Chairs for sub-committees will be elected at their respective first meetings.

6. Appointment of Council Representatives – It was confirmed that all Councillors would serve as representatives under the committee structures. Mr Elmer remains the Footpath Warden.

Resolved: To accept the Council Representatives list as presented.

7. Minutes of the Full Town Council Meeting held on 30 March 2026 – Cllr Ogden noted a confidential item to be discussed in the private session.

Resolved: To approve the standard minutes of the meeting held on 30 March 2026.

8. Chairman's Communication – The Chair noted the passing of Pat Mills, a long-serving former Councillor and community pillar. Congratulations were extended to Cllr McCallum and Alistair Jeffreys on their election results, and thanks given to Stuart Lawson for his service as one of our previous County Councillors. The Pump Track opening and Town Awards were reported as major successes.

9. Clerks/Officer Report/Update – The Clerk reported attendance at safeguarding training and the Suffolk Association of Local Council (SALC) larger town council forum.

10. Members of the Public – No members of the public wished to speak.

11. County and District Councillor Reports – Cllr Lynch provided a report on ESC planning scrutiny and procedural changes. No reports were available from Cllr McCallum or Cllr Lawson; Cllr Jeffreys was welcomed to his new role.

12. Finance & Governance

a. Schedule of Accounts: Cllr Ogden declared a non-pecuniary interest, Kesgrave Scout Leader.

Resolved: To approve the list of payments and receipts for March 2026.

b. Draft Risk Register 2026/27: * Resolved: To accept the Risk Register, with a separate land risk assessment to be drafted for review in June.

c. Draft Data Protection Policy (CCTV): * Resolved: To approve the policy, ensuring all staff with access sign for compliance.

13. Planning & Development – Minutes from 30 March 2026 and 13 April 2026 were received.

14. Community & Recreation

a. Pump Track Project: * Resolved: To remove this as a standing Full Council item and report via the C&R Committee.

b. ESC Land Adoption: The Clerk noted this will go to the ESC Cabinet in June.

c. Oak Meadow Play Area: * Resolved: To allocate £15,000 from CIL funds for safety surfacing improvements of new kit.

15. Local Council Award Scheme – The Clerk requested outstanding training records from Members.

16. Community Engagement – The Clerk provided a verbal update on new digital branding, newsletters, and the AI minutes trial.

Resolved: To approve the retention of the web designer for one month at a cost of £1,500.

17. Town Award and Recognition Scheme – The Clerk presented the paper on the outcome of the 2026 Awards and the proposal for the 2027 Awards.

Resolved: to agree the recommendations for the proposed 2027 Awards and for Cllrs Beecroft-Smith and Gibson along with the Clerk to meet and agree details, which will be presented to council later in the year. It was noted that the awards should be inclusive of all young people in the town not just those that attend schools in Kesgrave.

18. Devolution/LGR – We await confirmation for when the next Town/Parish council elections will be held, this will be decided by central government. It's currently understood that they could stay as they currently are, May 2027 but the term be extended from 4 years to 5 years to bring in line with other local elections or be delayed a year to May 2028.

19. Other/Urgent Communications –The draft documents for the completed 2025/26 Action Plan and the new 2026/27 Action Plan were presented.

Resolved: To accept both the Action Plans and make it a standard item to review the current Action Plan 2026/27 on the Finance & Governance Committee agenda.

20. Date of Next Meeting – Monday 29 June 2026 at 7.15pm.

21. Agenda Items for Next Meeting – None requested.

22. Resolution to Exclude the Public – Resolved: To exclude the public for the confidential session, the one member of the public left at this point.

This part of the meeting finished at 8.12pm.

Signed: Chairman..... Date.....