

GULDEN SUTTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Guilden Sutton Parish Council held on 1st April 2026 at

7.30 pm at Guilden Sutton Village Hall

Chairman: Cllr A Davis

Present: Cllr E-C Hewitt, Cllr D Hughes, Cllr M Littlewood, Cllr D Oxley and Cllr P M Paterson.

Clerk: Mrs E Haspell

Finance Officer: Mr M Roberts

In attendance: Borough Cllr Parker, PCSOs Hannath, PC Harrison, Mr S Tiplady and several Members of the Public.

1. Procedural Matters

(a) To receive apologies for absence.

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Ringstead and Cllr Roberts.

Apologies were received and noted from Mr B Lewin.

(c) Confirmation of minutes

It was proposed by Cllr Paterson seconded by Cllr Hewitt and agreed that the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 4th March 2026 be agreed as a true record of the meeting.

(d) Dates of future meetings.

6th May (Annual meeting)

3rd June

15th July

2nd September

7th October

4th November

2nd December

(e) Devolution Update

Cllr Paterson reported that a Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority had now been established, and that it would have an elected Mayor from May 2027. She added that it was considering how it could best serve rural areas.

She reported that she had sent a questionnaire to fellow Councillors, but had not yet received any feedback. She said that this may be a way of obtaining a better bus service. She read from the Rural Needs Analysis questionnaire and asked Councillors and residents to provide feedback to the Clerk on their top priorities for investment.

(f) Cheshire Community action membership

It was agreed to approve the annual membership of Cheshire Community Action.

(g) Training

It was agreed that Cllr Hewitt attends the Social Value for Parish & Town Councils training on Tuesday 28th April at 6:30 pm.

(h) Cheshire Association of Local Councils membership

It was agreed to approve the annual membership of Cheshire Association of Local Councils.

(i) Assertion 10

The Council agreed to set up a working group/communications group to address Assertion 10 and to look at adopting an IT Policy.

2. Community Engagement/Communications

(a) Visiting members' speaking time

Cllr Parker introduced herself as a Ward Member and advised that the consultation on the Peak Cluster has now closed. She has requested that the Peak Cluster hold a public meeting for Gowry Rural and other affected wards; however, no response has been received to date. As a Conservative Group, an Extraordinary Meeting has been requested. Cllr Parker will inform the Clerk once a date is confirmed. The meeting is expected to be held this month at the CWAC Chamber in Winsford.

A Planning Officer has been allocated to the School Lane application, which is currently out for consultation. Cllr Parker has arranged a meeting with the officer in the coming weeks to receive an update and has formally called in the application so that it will be determined by the CWAC Planning Committee. A Planning Officer has also been assigned to the Wood Farm Close application, which has likewise been called in. A meeting with the officer is scheduled for next week.

Cllr Parker explained that, due to the high volume of planning applications being submitted, the Conservative Group has called a further Extraordinary Meeting to discuss housing growth, which has increased by approximately 285%. The key concern is identifying where these homes will be located. Given the volume of applications, it may be September before the matter reaches the CWAC Planning Committee. She will continue to provide updates via the Parish Council and social media. Although the official consultation deadline is 16 April, officers have confirmed that comments will be accepted until 25 April. She also noted concerns regarding Green Belt sites being described as "grey belt".

Regarding the pedestrian crossing, Cllr Parker confirmed that it meets the required criteria. However, due to the volume of traffic, a standard crossing would not be suitable and a bridge would likely be required. This would be extremely costly and would use the available budget, making delivery unlikely in the near future. She also noted the potential for further housing development behind the DoubleTree hotel; should this proceed, the Council could seek Section 106 contributions from developers. The scheme does, however, meet the necessary criteria.

Cllr Parker advised that the Plus bus service has ended and the replacement service, Your bus has commenced today. Some initial issues have been identified, which she will seek to resolve. She also confirmed that her Member Budget will commence at the beginning of May, totalling £5,000 across her seven councils, and invited proposals for consideration. In addition, funding is available through the Cheshire West Crowd Fund scheme (similar to Spacehive); further details will be forwarded to the Clerk. She asked that the Clerk or Chair be contacted should any further assistance be required.

(b) Visiting officers' speaking time

PCSO Hannath and PC Harrison introduced themselves because there had been some redundancies within Cheshire Police. PCSO Hannath said that he would be covering the area along with the one he already has along with PC Harrison. He said that any issues could be raised via the Residents Voice via the QR code. This allows residents to voice any issues for parking and speeding etc.

Cllr Paterson said that a new School Street initiative had been introduced and said that it would be really good if there could be a Police presence especially regarding the parking on pavements etc.

(b) To consider the Code of Conduct and Members' interests

Cllrs Hughes and Littlewood as members of Guilden Sutton Green Space.

Cllr Hughes as a member of Guilden Sutton Community Association.

Cllrs Paterson and Littlewood as members of the Wildflower Garden project group.

Cllr Hughes as a governor of Guilden Sutton Primary School.

The Highways officer asked for residents feedback on what they can be working on next.

(c) Public Speaking Time

Speaker 1 - requested an update on the status of the Neighbourhood Plan, including whether it has been submitted, the expected submission/publication timescale, and where the Plan can be viewed. The Speaker noted the purpose of a Neighbourhood Plan (to set local planning policies to inform planning decisions), and referenced publicly available information indicating varying levels of completion across neighbourhood areas. The Speaker advised they had contacted the Parish Council by email on 28 January and had not received a response. The Speaker stated that an adopted Neighbourhood Plan would assist the Parish in responding to the current volume of planning applications and requested that their comments be fully recorded in the minutes. Cllr Paterson confirmed she would raise the matter under the Neighbourhood Plan agenda item.

Speaker 2 - reported that the bus timetable displayed on the noticeboard was out of date. The Speaker advised they had replaced the timetable and provided an additional copy for the car park noticeboard.

They reported that the 'Give Way' sign had been installed at the Station Lane junction.

They advised that the application documentation states the applicant has control over the adjacent field to the north.

The Chair confirmed that Beck Homes has a contract on both the first and second fields.

Speaker 3 - (representing a local WhatsApp group) requested that the Parish Council object to the outline planning application on School Lane. The Speaker stated that the application seeks to establish the principle of development and identifies a proposed access point, with other matters reserved, and that the indicative scale is approximately 90 dwellings (exact number not confirmed). Key points raised were as follows: (a) the site is within the Green Belt and, in the Speaker's view, is not a sustainable location for development of this scale; (b) highway safety concerns regarding the proposed access, including its location on/near a bend and potential conflicts with turning movements and pedestrians; (c) concerns that additional junction complexity is unnecessary; (d) existing constraints within the parish's lane network, including a lack of continuous pavements and limited accessibility for pedestrians, wheelchair users, prams and pushchairs (including at narrow sections and bends); (e) long-standing speeding concerns referenced in historic Parish minutes; (f) infrastructure concerns, including surface water/flooding issues, the capacity/condition of existing drainage and sewers (including reported flooding along Station Lane), and concerns regarding proposals to connect to a combined sewer; and (g) the cumulative impact of other developments in the wider area, with a request that the Parish Council consider liaising with Mickle Trafford Parish Council regarding cumulative impacts (including traffic movements via Station Lane) and the safety of access to cycling infrastructure.

Speaker 4 - stated that Station Lane is used as a cut-through route and can be very busy. The Speaker referred to traffic count concerns and wider cumulative development pressures in the area. The Speaker raised concerns regarding ground conditions (heavy clay), biodiversity impacts, flooding risk, and the capacity of local infrastructure (including sewers). The Speaker also raised capacity

concerns relating to local services, including primary school places, NHS dentistry and GP provision, noting additional pressure from recent/other nearby developments.

Speaker 5 - stated that many residents were unaware of the application, including those not using social media, and were advised that the Parish Council did not become aware until 24 March.

Speaker 6 - A show of hands indicated that the majority of those present objected to the planning application.

Speaker 7 - stated that the proposal was considered inappropriate and an unsustainable form of development in the Green Belt.

Speaker 8 - advised attendees to submit individual representations to Cheshire West and Chester Council by 25 April and noted that including specific planning-related points would strengthen submissions.

Speaker 9 - reported delivering leaflets and stated that some residents remained unaware of the application. The Resident asked how best to reach those residents and suggested that the Parish Council's ability to publicise may be limited.

The Chair said that the Parish Council must operate within applicable rules and regulations, and confirmed that members had listened to the points raised.

Speaker 10 - stated that they had initially provided feedback informally to the developer and were now making their comments more formal.

Speaker 11- (with experience in building services) stated that technical solutions may exist for issues such as pavements and drainage/sewers, and suggested considering potential mitigations and how these matters would be addressed.

Cllr Hewitt advised that the Parish Council was required to remain neutral in respect of the application.

(d) To receive a report concerning recent Public Correspondence.

It was reported that an issue relating to a boundary matter at Hooks Wood had arisen, but this had now been dealt with. It was also noted that the overflowing litter bin in the Church Lane car park had been reported and was being addressed. Correspondence had been received regarding the School Lane development, there was a suggestion that that could affect the provision of a footpath along Station Lane, as well as potential traffic-calming measures on School Lane and the possible need for additional crossing points.

It was explained that new housing developments can provide the Council with a share of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding, which could be used to support pavement provision and potentially improve the crossing to the A41. However, it was noted that this is not a sustainable location, as it is likely to be reliant on car-dependent households.

(e) To receive a report from Councillors presiding at the recent Surgery

Cllr Oxley said that a gentleman spoke regarding the back up of sewers. The Chair said that they would be returning in April to complete the works. Another gentleman from Summerfield House gave him an envelope with suggestions to aid the community. The Chair said that this had not yet been discussed.

It was agreed that Cllrs Hewitt and Littlewood would preside at the next surgery on 2nd May.

(f) To receive a report from the Communications sub-committee

Cllr Littlewood said a newsletter had been circulated to Councillors. The next edition will include updates on the Greenbelt Alliance; the deadline for comments on the School Lane application; improvements to Footpath 7; the start of School Street; concerns about e-bikes and dog fouling; and ongoing maintenance of footpaths and verges. Working with the Highways Officer—and in conjunction with Cllr Hewitt—residents will be asked to raise any issues and to identify other areas of concern. Cllr Littlewood also reported that James Hannath will be taking over as the area PCSO. The next Communications meeting will be held on 3rd June.

Cllr Littlewood invited residents to share their thoughts, ideas and feedback on how the council communicates with them.

One resident suggested that draft minutes should be posted on the noticeboards within two weeks of each meeting.

(g) To receive a report from the Support Group

Cllr Littlewood reported that e-bikes had been mentioned along with various roadworks and reported potholes. Also, that there had been some suspicious activity and regarding parking around the village and assistance was provided during a powercut on Cinder Lane.

(h) To consider matters regarding sustainability

Nothing to report.

(i) Resilience Plan

Nothing to report.

3. Open Spaces

(a) Guilden Sutton GreenSpace

Nothing to report.

(b) Wildflower Garden

It was reported that the Contractor had been contacted regarding the concreting of the base to the bench.

(c) Hilltop Road project

Nothing to report.

4. Transport and Highways

(a) To receive an update on Public Transport issues

Cllr Paterson reported that the local MP Sarah Pochin had been contacted about the bus situation. She said that there would be a walk around on the 17th April to show her the village.

(b) To receive an update from Councillors involved in the footpath working group.

Nothing further to report.

(c) To receive an update on Community Speedwatch

Cllr Hewitt reported that a Community Speedwatch Group had been formed. Cllr Littlewood added that PCSO James Hannath provides the Speedwatch training and that some volunteers were still awaiting training. It was noted that Speedwatch activities would begin after Easter.

(d) Highways

Cllr Hewitt reported that a walkaround with the CWAC Highways Officer was scheduled for 17 April, ahead of the walkaround with the MP. The purpose of the visit was to identify all reported issues, including potholes, access concerns, and any other matters raised.

Cllr Hewitt reported that there had been positive support and improvements within the village, noting that progress was necessarily gradual. She confirmed that engagement would be maintained and that an agenda would be circulated one week in advance. She further advised that she had engaged with Streetcare regarding disability access and had requested a further walkaround of the village to review the issues; she would confirm the date in due course and report back accordingly.

She also advised that a number of potholes on Guilden Sutton Lane had been repaired.

(e) Footpath 7

Cllr Littlewood reported that the Council is seeking to establish a footpath from the stables to Meadow Lea in response to residents' concerns. A survey published in last year's newsletter indicated that approximately two-thirds of residents considered the route to be dangerous, with the remainder stating that improvements were required. Cllr Littlewood noted that Cllr Ringstead had been instrumental in progressing this matter and confirmed that a number of landowners are involved.

Members also noted a request from residents to improve Footpath 7 (a bridleway running between Hooks Wood and the Greenway).

Cllr Davis reported that the footpath 7 has been widened and surfaced with crush-and-run material, and that efforts are also underway to improve the footpath at Station Lane.

(f) A41 junction improvements

Cllr Davis said that he was very disappointed with the report from Cllr Parker regarding the A41 improvements.

5. Planning

(a) New Applications:

It was clarified that, regarding the "front field", the second field is intended for maintenance and private use.

The Council considered the potential advantages and disadvantages of the proposed development. It was noted that many residents would like to remain in the village and that additional funding could become available to the Parish Council, including potential CIL funding. It was also noted that approximately 67% of children currently attending local schools come from outside the village. Concerns were raised regarding speeding in the village, the A41 junction, and sewer capacity.

Cllr Hughes proposed that the Council objects on Green Belt grounds and that the objection should be made as forcefully as possible, with any additional relevant comments included. Cllr Hewitt noted that the proposal is likely to return in some form and that individual representations will be important, suggesting that personal objections should be submitted where appropriate. Cllr Oxley commented that, regardless of location, the development would place pressure on the A41 junction; raised concern about sustaining local school numbers and the importance of retaining families in the village; and highlighted infrastructure constraints including drainage, water supply, bus services, and the capacity/availability of local services (shops, dentist, and school).

The Council resolved to object to the application and the vote was unanimous.

The Council agreed to engage with the WhatsApp group for future updates and communications, and to inform residents how to submit objections (including providing clear wording and instructions for responding to the application), and to display guidance on local noticeboards.

(b) Recent Applications

26/00830/OUT	Land at School Lane, Guilden Sutton, Chester. Outline permission for erection of up to 90 dwellings with all matters reserved except for access.	RECOMMENDED FOR REFUSAL.
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(c) Awaiting Decision:

24/02614/OUT	18 Ash Bank, Hare Lane Two storey dwelling	OBJECTION
25/00562/TPO	Church Farm, Church Lane 2x Yew trees – Remove epicormic stem growth, reduce crowns by 1-2m to maintain growth and overall health of the trees.	NO OBJECTION.
25/03143/FUL	Frogmore Cottage and Primrose Hill Cottage Church Lane Erection of greenhouse to the side of the dwelling and external alterations associated with the merging of Primrose Hill & Frogmore Cottage.	NO OBJECTION.
25/04003/OUT	Land at School Lane, Guilden Sutton, Chester. Outline planning application for the erection of up to 2 dwellings (with all matters reserved for future approval) landscaping and associated infrastructure.	OBJECTION
26/00081/PIP	Land at Hare Lane, Guilden Sutton Chester, Permission in principle for one dwelling.	OBJECTION
26/00015/RPA	The Summerhouse, Guilden Sutton Lane – Construction of vertical extension to create additional storey.	TO NOTE

		(comments not accepted).
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- (c) Decision Notices
- d) Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Paterson said she had served on the Neighbourhood Plan committee since 2016, but most of the original members had since dropped off. After Covid, the committee submitted its application to CWAC and received a thirteen-page response, which was disheartening for those involved. Since then, a new committee has taken over and completely rewritten the plan.

The work has been based largely on the Ashton Hayes plan, as it was approved more recently. The draft has been sent to an expert who has kindly formatted it. The committee met on Tuesday and meets every two weeks; they believe the plan is close to being ready to send to CWAC. She added that if CWAC does not agree with it, she doubts anyone on the committee would be willing to go through the process again.

The committee has engaged with residents from the outset, including at the fête, the rugby club, and in the village hall. Many people have said there is a need for affordable housing in Guilden Sutton, including options for downsizing, possibly bungalows. The School Lane site, being in the middle of the village, is expected to be considered “grey belt.”

A resident said that they would look forward to further updates.

She also noted that the parish is working with the Green Belt Alliance, pooling resources and commissioning experts to write reports. She attended a Scrutiny Committee where a report is being drafted and will be shared shortly, examining why certain areas should remain designated as green belt.

- e) Chester Green-Belt Alliance & CPRE

Cllr Paterson has reported on this as above.

- (f) Peak Cluster Scheme

Cllr Parker has reported on this as above.

6. Trees and Hedges

Nothing further to report.

7. Finance

- (a) To note recent items of income:

- (b) To approve recent items of spending:

M Roberts (Salary)	£413.25 (no VAT)
E Haspell (Salary)	£212.90 (no VAT)
HMRC (Payroll)	£162.57 (no VAT)
Botanica Landscapes Ltd (Grounds Maintenance)	£312.00 (inc. £52.00 VAT)
Botanica Landscapes Ltd (Lengthsman)	£234.00 (inc. £39.00 VAT)

M Roberts (Website)	£15.60 (inc £2.60 VAT)
M Roberts (Phone)	£14.30 (inc £2.38 VAT)
Autela Payroll Services (Payroll)	£102.00 (inc £17.00 VAT)
B M Lewin (Community Website)	£123.46 (inc. £20.60 VAT)
Guilden Sutton Primary School (Grant)	£300.00 (no VAT)
M Roberts (Defibrillator Pads)	£107.94 (inc £17.99 VAT)
V A Jones (Playing Field Rent)	£80.00 (no VAT)
S Roberts (Playing Field Rent)	£80.00 (no VAT)
St. John's Church (Graveyard Grant Shortfall)	£741.79 (no VAT)
M Roberts (Printer Ink)	£36.20 (inc £6.03 VAT)

(c) To approve updated account balances

Co-Operative Current Account	£672.11
Co-Operative Deposit Account	£15,000.00
Scottish Widows Business Fund	£81.12
Cambridge Building Society Deposit Account	£86,428.81

It was proposed by Cllr Hughes seconded by Cllr Paterson and agreed that the above listed payments would be made and balances would be approved. The Clerk would process the payments and Cllr Hughes would authorise.

It was agreed that the Finance Officer would arrange the transfer of £3,000.00 from the Co-op deposit account to the Current Account.

(d) Internal audit

It was agreed to approve the accounting statements, the AGAR and Assertion 10 at the June meeting.

8. Grounds Maintenance

(a) Hare Lane Village Green

Nothing further to report.

9. Primary School

It was agreed to purchase the Year six Leavers' books.

Cllr Davis reported that the school had held a Coffee morning and that the school was well supported by the parents. He said that permission had been given to use the outside tap and electric to clean the playground.

Cllr Hughes asked whether the Rugby club could be approached to obtain some season tickets.

10. Defibrillators

It was reported that the paediatric defibrillator pads had been installed in the Village Hall. Some awareness on how to use them would be publicised on the community Facebook page. Also, that suitable training sessions would be sought.

It was also reported that the lock (number pad) had broken on the defibrillator cabinet on Church Lane. It was agreed to ask a contractor to quote for the repair works.

11. Members Information

Cllr Hewitt reported that the litter on Guilden Sutton Lane was atrocious. Cllr Littlewood added that the Beavers would be carrying out a litter pick shortly.

Cllr Paterson reported that the School Street scheme had started, she asked if the CWAC Highways Officer could be informed about the car park markings and also about a pothole on Arrowcroft road in a critical spot.

Cllr Hughes said that the School Street scheme had made a significant difference and that the area was a lot quieter. He also thanked those maintaining the planters.

Cllr Oxley said that he would undertake the litter pick on Guilden Sutton Lane.

It was reported that the Play area should be inspected quarterly and that this item should be added to the next Agenda.

12. Exclusion of the Press and Public

It was proposed by Cllr Davis, seconded by Cllr Paterson and agreed that the Council would exclude members of the public to discuss confidential information under the provisions of section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act, 1960.

(a) Staffing

The Council confirmed the appointment of Mrs E Haspell to Parish Clerk.

It was also agreed to approve the Clerk's Membership of the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC). The Clerk to report back.

(b) Planning Enforcement matters

Various planning enforcement matters were raised.

Meeting closed 21.40 pm
