

RISBY PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Risby Annual Parish Meeting
Held on Thursday 1st May 2025

PARISH COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Derrick Abrey (Chairman), Simon Gray, Steve Smith, Chris Sutton and John Fairlie.

Also present: Joanne Kirk (Clerk), County Councillor Beccy Hopfensperger, District Councillor Susan Glossop. Viv South and Dave Edwards (Risby Village Hall), Sophie Flux (Risby Wildlife Group), Chris Lilley (Risby Charities).

APOLOGIES: Apologies were received from parish councillor Ian Turner.

Derrick Abrey Chairman of Risby Parish Council chaired the meeting. He welcomed everyone present. All the reports presented at the meeting are available on Risby Parish Council's website at <https://risbyparishcouncil.gov.uk/annual-parish-meeting/>

1. Approval of the minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday 2nd May 2024.

The minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman of Risby Parish Council, Derrick Abrey.

2. Report from County Councillor Becky Hopfensperger.

A copy of the report is available on Risby Parish Council's website.

Cllr Hopfensperger spoke about the following:

- Devolution and the creation of a combined mayoral authority with Norfolk and Suffolk.
- The local government reorganisation to form a unitary authority in Suffolk. SCC has put forward a case for one unitary council. The districts and borough councils have submitted a case for three unitary authorities. Greater Ipswich, East and West Suffolk. Some towns like Felixstowe and Woodbridge do not want to be part of a Greater Ipswich council. There would still be area offices if a unitary council is formed.

Her preferred option is a one Suffolk unitary council. She thinks there will be inconsistencies within adult and social care if there were more than one authority. There would also be competition over funding between the different authorities. It would be more expensive to have two or three unitary councils and there would also have to be equalisation of council tax between different areas with some areas would end up paying more.

The first elections would be for a mayor. The second election would be for a shadow authority. During the transition period the shadow authority would run the council until the unitary authority is fully up and running.

- South Street lorry survey. Would the location of the current VAS site be suitable? The Parish Council said no as it is too far from the South St junction.
- The resurfacing of Quay's Road will take place in June 2025.
- Havebury are going to reinstate quarterly ward visits and are going to be called in to West Suffolk Council to scrutinise their processes. Beccy Hopfensperger met one of the directors, who agreed that the service provided was not satisfactory and they will be reviewing their processes.

3. District Councillor Susan Glossop.

A copy of the report is available on Risby Parish Council's website.

The Local Plan will hopefully be adopted in the summer, but West Suffolk Council will then have to start straightway on a new Local Plan to reflect changes to the National Planning Policy Framework.

4. Risby Village Hall report by Darren Matthews.

A copy of the report is available on Risby Parish Council's website. Dave Edwards also gave the following village hall update:

- Phase 1 of the Ladies toilet refurbishment will begin on the 26th May 2025.
- Phase 2, the men's, will follow, once Phase 1 completed. Date TBA.
- The children's playground requires total replacement. The Village Hall Trustees are awaiting further quotes. The work is to commence in 2026. In the interim, Village Hall Trustees (VHT) are

arranging for a volunteer group to carry out general tidying up and improvements within the next 3 months.

- A permanent NO PARKING sign will be sourced for the allotment entrance.
- The VHT will be erecting signs around the play and green areas at the village hall reminding dog owners to pick up after their dogs and dispose of it responsibly.
- Fund raising continues for village hall improvement projects through events, grant applications and approaching larger companies for donations.
- The next event is a Comedy Night on Friday 16th May, Tickets are almost sold out.

5. Risby Wildlife Group by Sophie Flux.

This year, the Risby Wildlife Group has been busy with a range of activities aimed at supporting local wildlife and enhancing the village environment to do their small bit to fight against climate change and the nature crisis. Their work has included:

- Installing duck and wildlife signs around the village to help protect local animals and raise awareness among drivers and residents. Many thanks go to Vivien South and Sheila Rowell for leading on this and to the District and County Councillors for financially supporting this initiative.
- Ongoing maintenance of the planters outside the village hall, this year they are sharing with the garden club.
- Organising a wildlife evening walk around the Chalk Bank, where residents identified various species and discussed the area’s ecological value.
- Carrying out raking and maintenance of the Chalk Bank to help manage the habitat and encourage a greater diversity of plant life.

Looking ahead, the group has several projects planned for the coming year, including:

- Planting spring bulbs in the wildlife spiral to create a colourful and beneficial habitat for pollinators in 2026.
- Supporting the Parish Council with plans to install seating under the sycamore tree, providing a peaceful spot for residents to enjoy the outdoors.
- Organising more wildlife walks around the village to engage the community and promote appreciation of our local natural environment.

The Wildlife Group looks forward to continuing to work with the Parish Council and the wonderful Risby community. The climate and nature crises are deeply intertwined, with rising temperatures, habitat loss, and species decline putting our ecosystems — and our own wellbeing — at risk. Through the work of the Wildlife Group they hope to offer a small but meaningful sense of hope, for themselves and for the generations to come.

6. Risby Parish Council’s Chairman’s Report.

A copy of the report is available on Risby Parish Council’s website.

7. Risby Parish Council Financial Report.

A copy of the report is available on Risby Parish Council’s website. No questions were asked.

8. Any other issues or concerns raised by residents.

No issues were raised.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm.

Signed

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