

**St James South Elmham
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
held on 13th May 2025 at 7.30pm
in the Village Hall**

Committee Members present: Mr C.Bradley (Chair)
Mr A.Hadingham, Mr B.Crockford,
Mr R.Hadingham & Mrs A.Dinsdale
Mr M.Graham & Mrs S.Smith

8 Residents of the village

1. Chairman's Introduction

The Chairman welcomed everybody to the meeting, especially District Councillor Anthony Specca, District Councillor for Bungay and Wainford and Chair of East Suffolk Council. Mr Specca introduced himself and advised residents about proposed changes to Local Government and how best to contact him if residents wished.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Mrs L. Bradley & Mrs C. Rodbourne & Mrs M Henry (Clerk). The Chairman explained that Mrs S Smith had been coopted onto the committee at the last meeting and had agreed to assist, in the Clerks absence, with taking the notes and providing minutes for this meeting.

3. Minutes of the Previous (Precept) Meeting 26 November 2024

The minutes had been published on the parish noticeboard, and copies were available to read this evening. Mrs A Dinsdale then read a precis of the minutes.

Acceptance of the minutes was proposed by Mr C. Bradley, seconded by Mr R. Hadingham, vote unanimous. Signed by the Chairman.

4. Matters arising from the minutes

No Matters

5. Chairman's report & Village reports

Chairman's report

Update on The cottage and Laurel Farm: In early 2021 SCC issued Enforcement Notices on the owners/occupiers of both sites who then appealed. On 11 January 2023 the Planning Inspectorate made its decision for both sites. SCC started the prosecution process with a court date set for June 2024. This was deferred to Jan 2025, then again to March and is now expected in late 2025.

There have been no new planning matters.

The Chairman then invited short reports from representatives from the Church, Village Hall and Village Orchard.

For the Church: Mr B Crockford said that the church was struggling, and numbers are down, this mirrors the situation in other churches however there are still enthusiastic helpers and volunteers. The church has run several events including Choral concerts and a recent celebration of 80th VE Day which was well attended. The Chair congratulated them on the VE Day celebrations success.

For the Village Hall: The Chairman read out a report that he had been given to him. The hall continues to run a varied programme of events including regular music nights which have been successful. Craft afternoons with a different theme each month have been introduced and attracted people from outside the village. A full programme of events until the end of 2025 has been published. The Hall AGM will be held on Wed June 5th at 6.30pm. The Hall is hoping to continue its refurbishment work and is discussing the possibility of a small meeting room, dependent on funding. The main objective remains to maintain the hall as a social hub for the community.

For the Orchard: The Chairman advised that the shepherds hut had been painted, the entry gate and fences had been replaced or repaired and there were 3 new benches now in the Orchard.

The Chair then reported on the Infrastructure Improvement Programme of work within the village.

Telephone Kiosk Refurbishment :The painting and reglazing work has now been completed with the new St James signs being widely well-regarded. The next step is to finish the interior and connect up a power supply from the village hall.

Village Hall Landscaping: This links in with the work on the Telephone Kiosk, there is now access through the hedge and the water pump has also been painted, and landscaping plans and work are under way.

External Utilities: There will soon be an external 13A power supply installed from the hall kitchen.

Orchard Benches: There are 3 new benches delivered and installed.

Village Website: This is progressing well and The Chair acknowledged the work already completed by Ms G. Banns. There will be four main zones in the Website: access is via the home page into Parish Meetings, The Village Hall, The Orchard (where the current website) will be incorporated and The Church.

Physical signs in the village: Currently on hold

6. Financial reports

a. Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2025

The accounts for the year ending 31st March 2025 were presented, and explained by the Chairman. Thanks were extended to Mrs B. Crockford for preparing them.

Adoption of the Accounts was proposed by Mr A Hadingham - Seconded by Mr M Graham - The Vote was Unanimous. The Chairman signed the Accounts.

b. Annual Governance & Accountability Return

The Chairman then read out the governance statement which said that like all bodies concerned with local government we are required to demonstrate and confirm we have followed proper governance practices and properly managed our finances. There are particular requirements for Parish Meetings without a Parish Council and an exemption from external audit review in certain circumstances.

The chair then introduced, received and noted the Annual Internal Audit report. This was signed by Mr R Hadingham the Committee's internal Auditor.

The Chair then read through the Governance Return and advised the attendees they were welcome to see the document.

Acceptance of the Governance Return by the meeting was required this was Proposed by Mr D Ritchie - Seconded by Mr M Graham and agreed by the meeting and committee members. This was signed by the Chairman.

c. The Accounting Statement

This was displayed and explained as a summary of the accounts that the Committee had just been through. Approval was Proposed by Mr R Hadingham -Seconded by Mr M Graham. The vote was unanimous. This was signed by the Chairman.

d. Certificate of Exemption

The Chairman then announced that as a small Parish Meeting, with receipts and payments below £25,000 we may claim exemption from review by the external auditors.

This was Proposed by Mr A Hadingham - Seconded by Mr R Hadingham. The vote was unanimous. This was signed by the Chairman.

e. The Chairman then announced the dates for exercise of Public Rights of inspection of the records.

The dates for display are from 3 June until 14 July 2025.

7. Spending and donations for year ending 31st March 2026

Spending and donation amounts are taken from the money raised annually via the Precept.

The Chairman explained that there were certain expenditures that had to happen each year, for example Parish Meeting expenses, Suffolk Association of Local Councils membership, Data Protection fee and insurance.

Donations : The Chairman explained that we could go through each organisation individually or consider whether we wanted to keep the donations the same as the previous year. It was Proposed by Mr R Hadingham that we keep all the donations the same as the previous year. This was Seconded by Mr D Ritchie. The vote was unanimous.

8. Elections

Parish Meeting Committee Members serve for a period of 6 years. This year there were two members due to stand down. The Chair Mr C Bradley and The Clerk Mrs M Henry. Mrs M Henry had served the Committee for some 20 years and had expressed a desire to stand down. The Chairman acknowledged her dedication over the many years and explained that the committee agreed it was proper to make a retirement gift. This had been purchased and will be presented at a suitable time.

Mrs S Smith who was previously co-opted onto the Committee had offered to take over as clerk. This was Proposed by Mr C Bradley and Seconded by Mr M Graham. The vote was unanimous. Mrs S Smith was elected as Parish Clerk for 6 years.

Mr C Bradley then stood down as chair and the Clerk Mrs S Smith then raised the issue of electing a new Chairman. Mr C Bradley was willing to stand for a 3rd term and the attendees were asked if anyone else would like to also be considered for the role. Mr D.Ritchie Proposed Mr C Bradley be re-elected - Seconded by Mr M Graham. The vote was unanimous.

Mr C Bradley was thanked for his continued hard work and re-elected for a 6 year term as Chairman.

9. Other Business

Thanks was given to all those who continue to support the village in all capacities.

Thanks was given to all Committee members and S. Smith for her help this evening and Mrs B. Crockford for her continued help and support.

There was no other business raised.

The Chairman declared the Parish Meeting closed at 8.35pm.

ADDENDUM

Greshaw Green Enclosure Charitable Trust

Mr C. Bradley reminded those present of the purpose of the Greshaw Green Trust and how the funds were used. The fund currently stood at approx. £2,245.57.

The Trustees would welcome any recommendations for people who are thought to be in need. The confidentiality of any such donations was reassured and attendees were advised to speak to any Trustee in complete confidence.

There was no further business.

Meeting closed at 8.37pm.