

Paper 1 submitted by the Clerk to the Council at the Parish Council meeting on 02 September 2026

Parish Clerk's Report – September 2026

a) To review actions from the previous meeting

MINUTE NO.	ACTION	Ongoing/ Dismissed
PC 07.26.08	Review law ref. harassment of Councillors and add to agenda for September Parish Council meeting – included on September agenda	Dismissed
PC 07.26.11	Create a communications plan for circulation of A137 crossing point questionnaire – Completed	Dismissed
PC 07.26.11	Begin to circulate questionnaire as per the plan – ongoing	Ongoing
PC 07.26.12	Set a meeting for the NP Steering Group – ongoing	Ongoing

b) To receive the reports of items actioned under delegated powers and correspondence of note

- Meeting held with representatives from BDC ref. development plans for Factory site
- Weekly attendance at Meet the Clerk events
- Liaison and meetings with Skate Park providers in relation to Tender and procurement

Correspondence to note:

Date rec'd	Who	Subject	Action
03.07.26	Resident	Query ref. cutting of verge at BLC and additional trees	Response sent
03.07.26	BDC	Response from planning team to concerns raised about cesspit and plans for land adjacent to Scout Hut. BDC confirmed the planning decision could no longer be changed but that damage to the cess pit would not be allowed as part of the development	N/A
03.07.26	Vets	Notification from business previously known as Highcliff Vets that their name has now changed from Independent Vetcare Limited to Inspiring Vet Care Limited.	Noted
09.07.26	Corbally	Email requesting further details on location of Japanese Knotweed on their land	Response sent
09.07.26	Garage Sale team	Email notification that next year's event will take place on 20 June 2027	Noted
10.07.26	SCC	Email from Highways team following comments received from a member of the public confirming that SCC do NOT need there to be fatality on the A137 before they will consider safe crossing points	Response sent confirming the Parish Council position
22.07.26	PKF Littlejohn	Email noting that PKF Littlejohn will be trialling online uploading of External Audit documentation. Finance Committee to consider whether Brantham PC would like to be one of the first to be involved in this initiative	Added to FC agenda
22.07.26	Resident	Email from MoP confirming that they do not agree with a statement in the July 2026 minutes	Minutes amended accordingly
26.07.26	Resident	Email from local resident ref. new business and funding support	Response sent highlighting

			contributions fund
28.07.26	Corbally	Email confirming that the query has been passed to their directors who will be considering next steps	Chased follow-up on 24.08.26
29.07.26	Resident	Email from local resident highlighting concerns about street furniture left on Brooklands Road	Forwarded to SCC who have confirmed that these will be collected
30.07.26	BLC	Email from BLC manager ref status of Brantham Community Emergency Plan particularly in light of fires in the local area	Response sent. Asked relevant Cllrs to consider next steps. Added to agenda for discussion
04.08.26	BLC	Forwarded email from Dedham Vale Tree Surgery noting that the tree at the Lower Playing Field is diseased, dangerous and needs to be felled	Forwarded to Chair and JH for agreement and confirmed to BLC that this work could be undertaken
05.08.26	JPrice	Email from JPrice at Brantham Scout and Guide Group with an update on progress of handover of community land for Scout and Guide Hut and football pitches. Thanks noted to the Parish Council for helping to move this issue forward	Noted
14.08.26	Resident	Information shared about remains of fire on bridleway past the Rectory	Noted
24.08.26	BDC	Email informing the Council that a broken bench had been found on BDC land on Cattawade street and that this has been removed. BDC have confirmed that they will not be replacing this bench	Noted

a) To receive correspondence for consideration and agreement of next steps

From:

Sent: 14 August 2026 18:22

To: Sarah Keys <clerk@branthamparishcouncil.gov.uk>

Subject: Walked route on south side of A137 from the rail bridge by the Bull/Newmill Lane

Hi Sarah,

Please see below.

I hope you and/or anybody you know will be willing to support the adoption of this route.

Regards

From:

Sent: Friday, August 14, 2026 12:34 PM

To: Mary George <

Cc: Ben Heather <

Subject: Re: Definitive map modification order information link

Hi Mary,

Thank you for the info.

I have written to Brantham Parish Council(BPC) each February for the last 6/7 years saying I have walked and cycled this route. I have actually walked this route since moving to Brantham in 2000. This year I decided that it was time to try and get the route adopted before I get too old! SCC have been kept informed of the conversation between BPC and the landowner.

Having read through the info you pointed me to I will now look to find a number of people who are willing to submit in writing, via the forms provided, that they have used the route over the past 20years.

Thanks again

From: Mary George <
Sent: Thursday, August 13, 2026 10:37 AM
To: >
Cc: Ben Heather <
Subject: Definitive map modification order information link

Dear

Ben Heather passed on your request for information about submitting a formal application to add a public right of way to the definitive map on the basis of user evidence.

You can find guidance notes together with the user evidence form and application forms (schedules 7, 8 and 9) on the SCC website: [Apply for a definitive map modification order \(DMMO\) - Suffolk County Council](#)

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or require further information.

Kind regards

Mary George
Senior Definitive Map Officer

Paper 2 submitted by the Clerk to the Council at the Parish Council meeting on 02 September 2026

Protection of Parish Councillors from Harrassment, Abuse and Intimidation

a) Purpose of Report

At the last Parish Council meeting I was asked to look further into the legal position regarding the protection of Parish Councillors from harassment, abuse and intimidation when acting in their capacity as Parish Councillors, and to consider whether it would be advisable and possible for the Parish Council to adopt its own policy addressing this issue.

This report summarises the position and recommends that the Council develops and adopts a Councillor Safety, Respect and Unacceptable Behaviour Policy.

b) Legal Position

There is no single piece of legislation specifically protecting Parish Councillors from harassment by members of the public. However, councillors are protected by the general law in the same way as other members of the public.

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes harassment unlawful and can apply where there is a course of conduct which causes alarm or distress. Other legislation may also apply depending upon the circumstances, including offences involving threats, stalking or violence.

The Localism Act 2011 also places a duty on local authorities, including parish councils, to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by councillors. The Council's Code of Conduct therefore provides an important mechanism for dealing with unacceptable behaviour by other councillors, although it does not regulate members of the public.

It is therefore important to distinguish between the legal protection available to an individual councillor and the additional measures that a Parish Council can put in place through its own policies and procedures.

c) National Guidance

Both the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and the Local Government Association (LGA) recognise the increasing problem of abuse, intimidation and harassment directed towards elected members.

NALC's [Civility and Respect campaign](#) is specifically aimed at parish and town councils and states that there is no place for bullying, harassment or intimidation within the sector. NALC provides councils with a range of resources, including an Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy template.

The LGA's [Debate Not Hate](#) programme provides specific guidance for councillors dealing with harassment, abuse and intimidation. It recognises that councillors should not be expected to tolerate abuse simply because they hold public office.

The LGA's [Ending Abuse in Public Life toolkit](#) also encourages councils to establish clear expectations around behaviour, reporting arrangements and how the council will respond when behaviour becomes unacceptable.

d) Can a Parish Council adopt its own policy?

The short answer is, yes!

There is no legal barrier to Brantham Parish Council adopting a policy setting out reasonable expectations for behaviour towards its councillors and the steps the Council may take where those expectations are not met.

Such a policy would not create new legal powers. Instead, it would provide a clear framework for the Council to manage unacceptable behaviour and support individual councillors.

This could include:

- abusive, threatening or intimidating behaviour;
- repeated unwanted contact;
- harassment or stalking;
- inappropriate communications or social media activity;
- unreasonable behaviour at meetings or events;
- behaviour intended to intimidate a councillor into changing a Council decision; and
- behaviour which, although not necessarily criminal, interferes with a councillor's ability to undertake their public role.

The policy should also make clear that legitimate democratic criticism and challenge are entirely acceptable. Residents have the right to question and disagree with councillors and Parish Council decisions. The policy would apply only where behaviour crosses the line into abuse, intimidation, harassment or unreasonable conduct.

e) Examples of other Parish Councils

A number of parish councils have already adopted policies addressing unacceptable behaviour. For example, Northaw and Cuffley Parish Council has an [Unreasonable Behaviour Policy](#) dealing with unreasonable behaviour towards Council members and officers and like us, it also has a Dignity at Work Policy covering bullying and harassment.

Saltford Parish Council also has an [Unreasonable Behaviour Policy](#) which provides a framework for dealing with unacceptable behaviour involving members of the public, councillors and staff.

These examples demonstrate that introducing such a policy at parish level is both possible and consistent with existing practice.

f) Proposed approach for Brantham

Brantham Parish Council already has a Persistent and Vexatious Correspondence Policy. It is therefore recommended that a new policy complements this rather than duplicates it.

A Councillor Safety, Respect and Unacceptable Behaviour Policy could establish:

- the standards of behaviour expected when engaging with Parish Councillors;

- the distinction between legitimate criticism and unacceptable behaviour;
- how incidents should be reported and recorded;
- when the Clerk or Chair should intervene;
- circumstances in which communication may be directed through the Clerk rather than an individual councillor;
- how repeated or unreasonable contact may be managed;
- when matters should be referred to Babergh District Council's Monitoring Officer; and
- when the police should be contacted.

This would give councillors and the Council a clear and consistent framework rather than requiring individual councillors to deal with difficult situations themselves.

g) Recommendation

It is recommended that Brantham Parish Council:

1. Notes the legal position regarding the protection of Parish Councillors from harassment, abuse and intimidation.
2. Notes the guidance and resources provided by NALC and the LGA, including NALC's specific Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy resources for Parish and Town councils.
3. Agrees that it is both appropriate and possible for Brantham Parish Council to adopt its own policy addressing unacceptable behaviour towards Parish Councillors when acting in their official capacity.
4. Agrees that the policy should protect councillors from abuse, harassment, intimidation and unreasonable behaviour whilst expressly preserving residents' right to legitimate democratic criticism and challenge.
5. Agrees that a draft "Councillor Safety, Respect and Unacceptable Behaviour Policy" be prepared for consideration by Council, taking account of the Council's existing Persistent and Vexatious Correspondence Policy and relevant NALC and LGA guidance.

h) Conclusion

There is a clear national recognition that Parish Councillors should not be expected to tolerate abuse, intimidation or harassment simply because they undertake a public role.

While existing legislation provides protection where behaviour reaches the relevant legal threshold, NALC and the LGA also encourage councils to establish their own local policies and procedures.

It is therefore considered that adopting a specific policy would be a proportionate and proactive step for Brantham Parish Council, providing councillors with greater clarity and support while maintaining residents' right to robust and legitimate democratic engagement.

The integrity of the Council's finances is to be protected by two of the three signatories checking and reviewing the invoices for payment for which they will have seen an original copy.

Within the Council's Financial Regulations (5.15) – expenditure on revenue items may be authorised up to the amounts included for that class of expenditure in the approved budget or where prior approval has been given for such expenditure to be incurred (i.e. under contractual agreements)

The authority is to be determined by; * the council for all items over £5000; * a duly delegated committee for all items over £1000 * the Clerk, in conjunction with Chairman of Council or Chairman of the appropriate committee, for any items below £1000. Such authority is to be evidenced by a minute or by an authorisation slip duly signed by the Clerk, and where necessary also by the appropriate Chairman.

Invoices will only be processed for payment by the Parish Clerk once she is satisfied that the payment sums match the invoices produced.

Accounts submitted for payment – Current Account *(SUBJECT TO ADDITIONS)*

Payee	Detail	Method	NETT	VAT	TOTAL

Accounts Paid since 01 July 2026

Payee	Detail	Method	NETT	VAT	TOTAL
Parish Council staff costs	Salaries, Office Allowance, Pension payments – July & August 2026	BACS	8583.68		8583.68
BMCIC	Grounds Maintenance Payment - July & August 2026	BACS	80.00		80.00
Microsoft	Monthly Subscription Charges – July & August 2026	DD	4.32	8.06	48.38
Virtual Landline	Phone number for Parish Council – July & August 2026	DD	14.58	2.92	17.5
Smarty.co.uk	CCTV SIM Cards - July & August 2026	DD	54.00		54.00
Lloyds Bank	Bank Charges	BACS	8.50		8.50
HMRC	P30 PAYE & NI	BACS	2569.48		2569.48
Brantham Fun Run	Donation	BACS	500.00		500.00
Village Hall Brantham	Hall Hire (inv. 2077)	BACS	48.00		48.00
VCS Websites	Website hosting and management	BACS	155.00		155.00
Suffolk Association of Local Councils	Training	BACS	105.00	21.00	126.00
Birketts	Legal Advice/Work	BACS	1391.50	278.30	1669.80
Bin Shop	Litter bin – Gravel Pit Lane Play area	BACS	225.00	45.00	270.00
Babergh District Council	Dog and Litter bin emptying	BACS	4536.00	907.20	5443.20
Dependable Dave	Grounds Maintenance (Inv. 2563)	BACS	405.00		405.00
Amazon Business	Ear defenders (BOS)	BACS	28.73	5.75	33.44
Bin Shop	Litter bin for Lower Playing Field	BACS	203.80	40.76	244.56

Babergh District Council	Play area inspections	BACS	196.59	39.33	235.92
JR Keeble Ltd	Gravel Pit Lane Play area rent	SO	10.00		10.00
Superstructures Ltd	Survey of Brantham Leisure Centre roof	BACS	765.00	153.00	918.00
The River Stour Trust	CIL donation	BACS	1500.00		1500.00
IT Services at CAS	Additional email address for Procurement purposes	BACS	16.88	3.37	20.25
Dependable Dave	Grounds Maintenance	BACS	210.00		210.00
Amazon	Laptop stand for Parish Council office	DC	33.32	6.66	39.98

Receipts allocated since 01 May 2026

Who	Detail	Method	Amount
Cash Deposit	Village Fete income	CAS	155.00
AJ McCauley	Fete refund – train	BACS	50.00
BMCIC	Legal Costs refund	BACS	2651.50
Kersey Freight Ltd	Donation towards Memorial Garden	BACS	250.00
Braiswick Photographic	Private Road Rent	BACS	150.00
Crowdfunder	Skate Park Income	BACS	48.32
BMCIC	50% reimbursement of Survey of Brantham Leisure Centre roof	BACS	382.50

Presented by:..... Sarah Keys, Responsible Finance Officer

Countersigned by:..... Chair to the Parish Council

All payments authorised under The Parish Councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012

Note: Council resolved at the 2023 Annual Meeting that it met the eligibility conditions, and this continues right through until the next relevant annual meeting which will be May 2027. This is regardless of whether the Council continues to meet those conditions for the duration, (para 7.12 of the Explanatory Memorandum to The Parish Councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012 refers.

Brantham Parish Council

Prepared by: _____

Date: _____

Name and Role (Clerk/RFO etc)

Approved by: _____

Date: _____

Name and Role (RFO/Chair of Finance etc)

A	Bank Reconciliation at 31/07/2026		
	Cash in Hand 01/04/2026		189,963.55
	ADD Receipts 01/04/2026 - 31/07/2026		98,212.04
	SUBTRACT Payments 01/04/2026 - 31/07/2026		43,488.21
	Cash in Hand 31/07/2026 (per Cash Book)		244,687.38
B	Cash in hand per Bank Statements		
	Petty Cash 31/07/2026	0.00	
	Current Account 31/07/2026	5,001.00	
	Deposit Account 31/07/2026	239,647.37	
	Salaries Account 31/07/2026	39.01	
			244,687.38
	Less unrepresented payments		
			244,687.38
	Plus unrepresented receipts		
	Adjusted Bank Balance		244,687.38
	A = B Checks out OK		

Accord Between Parish Councils and Dedham Vale National Landscape & Stour Valley Partnership

Preamble

Parish councils in and around the Dedham Vale National Landscape and Stour Valley Project area have common interests. This accord seeks to facilitate and enable those common interests to be better served for the benefit of residents and visitors.

Parish Councils are established by statute to represent parishioners at the first tier of local government in England. In that capacity, they are best placed to appreciate and understand the parish and its settings, to advocate on parish matters and to engage with other bodies on behalf of residents. They might be considered as ideally situated to act as “the eyes and ears on the ground”.

Dedham Vale National Landscape and Stour Valley Partnership acts as a champion for the nationally designated Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and for the Stour Valley project area. The Partnership is made up of around 20 organisations who are committed to supporting the delivery of the purpose of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty designation, which are branded “National Landscapes” to conserve and enhance the natural beauty. Partnership members work together with National Landscape staff to deliver the statutory National Landscape management plan and with others to deliver statutory obligations.

Purpose of this Accord

The purpose of this accord is to facilitate closer working arrangements between Parish Councils and the Partnership. These arrangements are intended to assist and enable the Partnership to deliver its current management plan, which is required to be reviewed every five years for the benefit of the environment of the Dedham Vale National Landscape and Stour Valley, its natural beauty, defined through its landscape quality, scenic quality, relative wildness, relative tranquillity, natural heritage features and cultural heritage, and for the benefit of its residents and visitors. The Partnership’s objectives are set out in and delivered through its management plan for the period 2026-2031, a copy of which can be downloaded at:

<https://dedhamvale-nl.org.uk/managing/management-plan/>

Commitment

The Accord is a non-binding agreement that represents a commitment by both parties to work together to maximise the benefits to enhancing and protecting the environment in the Dedham Vale National Landscape and Stour Valley project area.

This Accord is specific to the Parish Council indicated below.

A list of the parish councils within and adjoining the Dedham Vale National Landscape and Stour Valley project area is at Appendix A.

Commitment from the Parish Council

The Parish Council will use its reasonable endeavours to support the aim and objectives of the Partnership, in particular in relation to matters set out in Appendix B.

Commitment from Dedham Vale National Landscape

The Partnership will, subject to the availability of its resources, use its reasonable endeavours to support the Parish Council on matters such as those set out in Appendix C.

Agreed on behalf of:

..... for *[to be entered]* Parish Council

Date:

..... for Dedham Vale National Landscape and Stour Valley Partnership

Date:

Appendix A

(1) Parish Councils within the Dedham Vale National Landscape

Essex	Suffolk
Lawford	Brantham
Dedham	East Bergholt
Langham	Stratford St Mary
Boxted	Holton St Mary
Little Horkesley	Raydon
Wormingford	Higham
	Shelley
	Stoke by Nayland
	Nayland with Wissington
	Polstead
	Boxford
	Leavenheath
	Assington

(2) Parish Councils within the Stour Valley Project Area

Essex	Suffolk
[to be completed]	[to be completed]

(3) Parish Councils adjoining the Dedham Vale National Landscape and Stour Valley Project Area

Essex	Suffolk
[to be completed]	[to be completed]

Appendix B

Commitment from the Parish Council

The Parish Council will aim to support the Partnership working alongside the National Landscape (NL) staff team in delivering its management plans and where appropriate, working in collaboration with neighbouring parishes and other bodies in furthering these aims. The Parish Council will aim to:

- Support work that contributes to and protects the statutory purpose of the National Landscape, including conserving and enhancing defined features of landscape quality, scenic quality, relative wildness, tranquillity and natural and cultural heritage
- Report to the NL staff team developments or events within the parish that have the potential to enhance or degrade the National Landscape
- Share with the NL staff team information about the parish that can assist the Partnership in responding to significant developments
- Identify opportunities to enhance access to the National Landscape and Stour Valley project area and work with the NL staff team and relevant Highway Authorities
- Identify and support volunteering opportunities in the parish and encourage parishioners to participate in the NL volunteer programme
- Where the Parish Council considers appropriate, contribute financially to the work of the NL staff team
- As relevant authorities under section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) - as amended by section 245 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (2023) - seek to further the purpose of the National Landscape in its decision making
- Contribute to the statutory five-year National Landscape management plan review.

Appendix C

Commitment from the Partnership

In delivering its management plans and subject to the availability of resources, the Partnership will through the NL staff team aim to support the Parish Council in the following areas:

- Facilitate the provision of small grants to deliver National Landscape purpose
- Give wildlife and nature conservation advice to accessible space
- Provide the opportunity for volunteers to support community action on environmental and access projects
- Welcome hearing about impactful planning applications
- Share responses to planning consultations, including Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects
- Offer the lending of materials to raise awareness of the National Landscape's aim, activities and volunteering opportunities for parishioners.
- Provide pre-submission thoughts on developing neighbourhood plans, including access to National Landscape advice (for example, use of lighting in development, use of colour in development)
- Provide support to Parish Councils in meeting their statutory duties to the National Landscape as a Relevant Authority ⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ Parish Councils are held to be a Relevant Authority under s245 of the Levelling Up & Regeneration Act (2023). Relevant authorities and statutory bodies have an obligation to:

Seek to further the purpose of the AONB [National Landscape] designation to conserve and enhance natural beauty when undertaking activity that impacts the nationally designated landscape.