



Parish Office, Sports Pavilion, Hundred Acre Way, Red Lodge, Suffolk, IP28 8FQ 01638 551257  
clerk@redlodgeparishcouncil.gov.uk <http://redlodgeparishcouncil.gov.uk>

## **Minutes of the Red Lodge Annual Parish Meeting**

This is an informal meeting for all local government electors registered in the parish.

**Date:** Tuesday 6 May 2025

**Time:** 19:00

**Venue:** St. Christopher's Church, Boundary Road. Red Lodge. IP28 8JQ.

**Present:** Cllr. Sandra Dwan (Chairman)  
Cllr. Michael Berry  
Cllr. Susan Houlder  
Cllr. Ian Thompson

**In Attendance:** Clerk/RFO

**Non-Attendee:** Cllr. Rachel Ahmed  
Cllr. Andy Drummond  
Cllr. Patricia Judd

**Members of Public:** 15

	Item	Action
1.	<b>Chairperson's welcome</b>	
2.	<b>Apologies for absence</b>  Apologies were received and accepted for the following: Cllr. Drummond; Cllr. Judd; D. Cllr. Dicker and St. Christopher's Church. <b>Noted</b>	
3.	<b>Report from the Chairman of the Parish Council</b>  The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, and stated that it will be interesting to hear about activities during the last year which are important to the village and help to create a cohesive, family orientated village. The Chairman read out the following report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Planning: Red Lodge Northern Land (300 homes)</b>  During recess it was noted that the developers for this area of 300 homes had submitted plans which had been changed removing the proposed local centre completely. Members felt that this loss of amenity was not acceptable and submitted an objection. The Council gained the support of the local Member of Parliament, whose own agenda includes the need for developers to give back to the community. As a result, the outline plan for the area has now been revised and the local centre has been reinstated and will be included going forward to the next stage, which is consideration of Reserved Matters (the detail).  All other Planning Applications were considered in detail and dealt with transparently. </li> <li> <b>Sports pavilion</b>  The Sports Pavilion is going from strength to strength, the number of groups using the facility, field and building, continues to grow and has increased to 22 user groups, currently, some using the facilities several times during the week, with yet more making enquiries. </li> <li> <b>Highways</b>  Parking and Traffic Calming measures have now been completed along Hundred Acre Way. </li> <li> <b>Events</b>  Tickets to the Children's Christmas Party held in December were sold out. Father Christmas was in attendance and had his photo taken with families and also gave out goody bags to children - who returned the favour with pictures and gifts that they had made, which was very touching.   In June, a 'Circus Big Top' family day was held. This was a brand new event and after a slow start, proved to be a huge success. All of the tickets were sold </li> </ul>	

out and feedback from both those attending and on Facebook has as all been very positive.

Lightwave also provided a wide variety of free entertainment for Children which was great.

A big thank you to the volunteers who made these events successful. Also thank you to D. Cllr. Dicker and C. Cllr. Drummond for their continued support and contributions.

- D Day - June 6<sup>th</sup> 2024**

A service was held that was well attended, followed by light refreshments provided by Lightwave. Thank you to everyone who took part in this very poignant event of remembrance.
- Electric car sockets**

Work to provide electric car sockets to be sited at the Sports Pavilion Car Park is progressing.
- Playgrounds**

The Council agreed to set up a Working Party, in order to consider the increasing costs of maintenance against replacement, this had also been highlighted by West Suffolk’s Playground Inspector.
- Precept**

For the second year, the precept had to be increased in order to keep up with escalating costs. This amounted to a 96p increase per month per property, based on band D properties. The cost of materials, wages, increased NI employer’s contributions and contractors have all had to be taken into account.

To offset increasing costs, the Finance Working Party recommended that investment should be made initially on a short term basis.
- Donations**

A number of Donations has been made to a total of £3,500:

Brownies	£100
U10’s FC	£100
U14’s FC	£100
Over 65’s lunch	£100
VE Day	£100
Lightwave	£3000
- Lightwave**

Are still providing services to help the youth and the elderly – services such as Warm Spaces which have a big impact across the village and are widely appreciated.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Police</b> A new Police Constable has been assigned to Red Lodge and a commitment made to attend Parish Meetings to give people access to raise issues of concern. The Police have noted that the crime rate has fallen lately.</li> <li>• <b>Thermal imaging</b> The scheme was organised by the Parish Council to assist residents identify areas of heat loss in a property.</li> <li>• <b>Sunnica</b> There is an ongoing commitment to support Sunnica Community Action Group.</li> <li>• <b>Parish council surgeries</b> A number of surgeries were held, the council may re-package and try these again.</li> <li>• <b>Devolution</b> The Parish will be keeping up to date on what happens as devolution develops, for possible impacts on the Parish Council.</li> </ul> <p>Finally, the Parish Council has much to thank its employees for all their work hard to keep the Parish in good order; from meeting the standard on the pitches to the management of our accounts - their efforts should be recognised and appreciated.</p> <p><b>Noted</b></p>	
<b>4.</b>	<p><b>Reports from County Councillor</b></p> <p>The following report was read out on behalf of C.Cllr. Drummond:</p> <p>As a member of the Conservative Party, I was delighted that Nick Timothy was elected Minister of Parliament for West Suffolk in July 2024. Nick is an excellent constituency MP, and I know he has already engaged with all the parishes within my division, and I work closely with his team to ensure his constituency days (which tend to be on Fridays) are as beneficial as possible.</p> <p>I'm the Newmarket and Red Lodge division, Suffolk County Councillor which covers half of Newmarket - that being the North ward and half of East ward. The division also covers five other parishes: Red Lodge, Kentford, Moulton, Dalham and Herringswell which completes the division.</p> <p>I also represent Icení ward on West Suffolk Council – as its within my county division and I live in the village of Herringswell – part of the division/ward.</p> <p>I am also a member of Newmarket Town Council and Red Lodge Parish Council. In January this year county decided to take advantage of the devolution offer from government which will see a combined authority of Norfolk and Suffolk with an elected mayor and a unitary (or series of unitary) councils below that will assume the responsibilities of county and district alike. The structure is in the process of</p>	

	<p>being decided but what this has meant is that Suffolk County Council elections were cancelled – because the structure is being disbanded and this alone saves £1m in election costs.</p> <p>On county I’m a member of the development and regulation committee - a kind of planning committee - not for housing because that’s the remit of West Suffolk - but for development that county has the powers to determine itself such as public rights of way, schools, and quarries.</p> <p>I try to attend all the town and parish meetings that occur in my division - it can be complicated because they are sometimes on the same night. For example, Mondays tend to be quite busy with many meetings on the same day and at the same time.</p> <p>At the parish meetings I usually give a verbal report. A written monthly parish newsletter that covers Suffolk is sent to your members by email. I take questions and feedback to the parish clerk on any queries that I can’t answer on the night.</p> <p>During the month I cascade information that I receive to parish clerks such as deployment dates of the ANPR camera and road closures which is hopefully shared with local members.</p> <p>I’m contactable on: Andy.Drummond@Suffolk.gov.uk or mobile on 07710 027 343 if you have any issues pertaining to county which could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roads and transport</li> <li>• Care and support for adults, children, families, and learning</li> <li>• Fire and rescue services</li> <li>• Trading Standards</li> <li>• Waste recycling</li> <li>• Culture, heritage, and leisure</li> </ul> <p>County councillors have two types of locality budget - one that’s non-specific and another for Highways issues.</p> <p>I will now detail the various projects across my division during 2024/25:</p> <p><b>Newmarket</b></p> <p>Through collaboration with Cllr Hood (county councillor for Exning &amp; Newmarket) we successfully appealed to the new owner of Morecroft House to restore the pathway between Laureate School Road and Willie Snaith Road</p> <p>We are also collaborating on a cycle path connection between Exning &amp; Burwell that will soon come to fruition.</p> <p>Newmarket Charitable Trust – contribution to shop signage for a High Street pop-up shop</p> <p>Newmarket Day Centre – specialist gardening equipment</p>	
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	<p><b>Red lodge</b> The yellow lining of Hundred Acre Way was completed, and the associated Traffic Regulation Order put in place. This was the completion of a project started in 2020.</p> <p><b>Moulton</b> Improvements to the Boy's Grave junction – promised for completion by 6<sup>th</sup> June.</p> <p><b>Kentford</b> Defibrillator £1500</p> <p><b>Herringswell</b> Added capital funding for road signage at Warren Road and Tuddenham Road</p> <p><b>Dalham</b> Various ongoing speeding issues Promise of £500 towards floor refurbishment in the village hall</p> <p>Annual Town &amp; Parish Meetings are always a good way of getting a feel for what's going well and what's not – contentious issues draw big crowds whereas small crowds indicate satisfaction!</p> <p>With respect to the meetings that I can attend, I look forward to finding out what issues are of concern to residents.</p> <p><b>Noted</b></p>	
<b>5.</b>	<p><b>Reports from District Councillors</b></p> <p>None <b>Noted</b></p>	
<b>6.</b>	<p><b>Reports from Mildenhall Police Safer Neighbourhoods Team</b></p> <p>None <b>Noted</b></p>	
<b>7.</b>	<p><b>Reports from Groups attending the meeting</b></p> <p><b>7.1 1st Red Lodge Scout Group read the following report:</b></p> <p>The Scout Group continues to be very active taking part in group activities, district activities as well as events in the community. Numbers in Squirrels, Beavers, Cubs and the Scout sections continue to be high with over 70 young people aged from 4-18 years. Currently we have a good number of adult volunteers and young leaders in all sections, although more would be appreciated.</p>	

	<p>Our young members have the opportunity to take part in many activities including camping, kayaking, hiking, climbing, abseiling, archery, air rifles, tomhawk throwing water activities such as kayaking and bell boating.</p> <p>We continue to try to be active within the village doing litter picking, joining in the local Remembrance parade and service etc.</p> <p>However, our biggest problem remains the lack of a safe secure outdoor area within the village for Scouting. Where we can safely meet and do traditional outdoor activities, such as fire lighting, cooking on fires, saw and axe skills etc.. We have been seeking/asking for this now for over 10 years and very disappointingly, are still no further forward. Currently we can only do these activities if we travel to a Scout site elsewhere. This greatly affects what we can do on a weekly basis and in some cases the opportunity for our young members to achieve the top scouting awards. This is far from ideal. A space of our own would also enable us to store all our equipment in one place. Currently we rely on sympathetic landowners who allow us to keep our storage container and trailer on their properties. Thank you to them both.</p> <p>We appeal for all those in local authority positions to listen and support our needs and to do everything in their power to help us achieve this as soon as possible. Please let them have the foresight to invest in the youth of today. Come to visit us and see what we so with our young members enabling them to flourish, learn new skills, gain confidence, learn to be independent and above all develop leadership skills. Where else can all this be achieved? All down to a small band of volunteers who give a great deal of their time. My sincere thanks goes out to each and every one of them.</p> <p>The Chairman of the Parish Council informed the group that the planning application for the Northern Land will be going to reserved matters, the Parish Council will raise a voice on behalf of the 1<sup>st</sup> Red Lodge Scouts, requesting a parcel of land for the group's activities. The Chairman also advised the group to contact the Local MP Nick Timothy.</p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>7.2 Red Lodge Lightwave – the following report was read out:</b></p> <p>The Lightwave Hub Red Lodge continued with its goals for 2024/5. These focused on being light in our community, growing younger, discipleship and sustainability.</p> <p><b>Highlights</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanded our youth programme through a full-time youth worker visiting schools, running youth activities and a summer holiday session for 30 young people</li> <li>• 104 primary school children attended the “Under the Sea” holiday club, with twenty volunteers</li> <li>• 11 youth volunteers are regular helpers through DofE and Princes Trust</li> <li>• Sustained our food bank and Helping Hands programme with more</li> </ul>	Members
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complex cases

- Closed our community café and moved some activities to St Christopher's Church due to reduction in funding from West Suffolk Council

Partnerships have helped toward being the light and love in our community:

**Parish Council** -£3000 grant for our holiday club & food bank

**District Councillor** - £ 1900 grant for youth facilities at St Christopher's Church

**West Suffolk** - £5000 toward our service to the community, £3963 for equipment for our children & young people's groups and £1400 for Warm Spaces

**Suffolk Community Foundation** - £1655 Breakthrough Fund, £2000 to support our food bank and £5000 for utility bills for pensioners and the disabled.

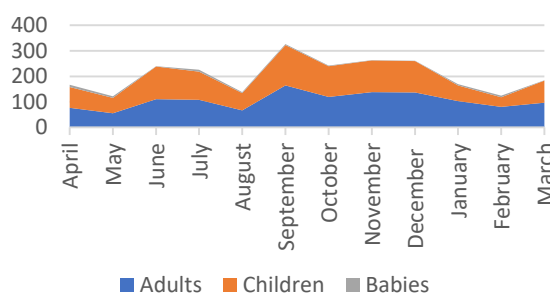
**Tesco Foundation** - £1000 for our Holiday Club

**Yorkshire Bank** - £1000 for our food bank

Helping Hands:

Beyond helping people with food bags, we help people look at the causes of their difficulties. This includes budgeting, looking for employment, applying for benefits (Pension Credit, PIP, Blue Badge etc.). An increasing need is to help people access digital information; smartphones are not easy to use when looking at detailed information or filling in application forms. We provide access to computers, Wi-Fi and printing. Our Warm Space grant enabled us to offer free refreshments and a warm space from December to March

**People Served 2024/5**



### Wellbeing

A recent survey of secondary school students wellbeing across Suffolk was published early in 2025; MCA was one of the participating schools. Most young people in Suffolk are coping well with their mental health; the index has recovered from lows during the pandemic. It highlighted concerns about sexuality, bullying, friendships, money and the future. We are using this report and an investigation with Suffolk Mind to help young people identify their wellbeing concerns and to help them manage their own wellbeing as much as possible. We are concerned that secular organisations do not include a faith dimension in their surveys and follow up; this is a challenge for us.

Highlights from the Mildenhall College Academy survey include:

- *Wellbeing -the school average of 22.3 is lower than the Suffolk average of 22.8 for the SWEMWBS scale. We have addressed this by running wellbeing Wednesday sessions to all.*

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Our year 10 cohort say they have the best wellbeing with Year 7 having the lowest. This is likely to do with the transition from primary to secondary school and the big change here.</i></li> <li>• <i>80% of students know who and how to access support if they were struggling with their mental health.</i></li> <li>• <i>The three biggest concerns of students are time, appearance and school.</i></li> <li>• <i>Students would like to see a small gap between each of lessons. This has been done except for one part of the day.</i></li> <li>• <i>89% of students said they felt safe at MCA. With bullying being the biggest worry amongst students. We have just launched a new website page to help educate parents and carers on what the academy does to support.</i></li> </ul> <p>The free Men's Breakfast takes place on the last Saturday of the month, building relationships and providing a place to meet and make friends. Additional activities have included litter picking, cycle maintenance and a collaboration with EPIC Dad.</p> <p>Growing younger We secured three years funding for one full-time and two part-time children &amp; youth workers for three years to expand our work in surrounding villages of Beck Row, Moulton, Kentford and Gazeley.</p> <p>Supporting community initiatives Hope Community Choir started in September using funding from a private individual and have performed on two occasions to invited audiences</p> <p>Sustainability We have moved several activities to St Christopher's Church as the grant from West Suffolk Council for rent at Red Lodge Sports Pavillion has decreased from £5000 in 2024/5 to £1489 in 2025/26. Our community café was losing money and reluctantly we closed it in September 2024. We continue to host Helping Hands on Mondays, Toddlers Group on Thursdays and Youth café on Fridays at the Sports Pavillion.</p> <p>The Red Lodge Northern Land Development has severely reduced the space for community services, so we are now looking at the possibility of securing land next to the proposed secondary school for Red Lodge.</p> <p>Red Lodge Hub Targets for 2025/6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand our youth and children's work to surrounding villages</li> <li>• Sustain our Helping Hands and foodbank services</li> <li>• Enhance our support for wellbeing of children &amp; young people Increase opportunities for work experience for young people</li> </ul> <p><b>Noted</b></p>	
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7.3	<p><b>Red Lodge Conservation Group circulated the following report:</b></p> <p><b>Red Lodge Heath SSSI</b>  Red Lodge Heath is an important site both historically and for its wildlife. This 20.75 Hectare site is a remnant of a medieval rabbit warren that would have extended as far as Freckenham. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century George Rothschild, one of the pioneers in recognising the need for nature conservation, included Red Lodge Heath as a site that should be protected because of its important assembly of wildlife. However, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century much of the heath was lost to housebuilding, road construction and agriculture, so only one-tenth of the original warren and heathland remains. Gravel extraction has created the deep pits and ponds and the site comprises a mix of habitats: dry acid grassland, chalk grassland, lichen heath and wet woodland. In 2005 the site was designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest, one of 3000 legally-protected wildlife sites in the UK. The site is important for its invertebrates, including the nationally rare five-banded tailed digger wasp, and some nationally rare plants, including Breckland Thyme. With the current expansion of housing development in the area and the proposed Sunnica Energy Farm adjacent to Red Lodge, the SSSI will become even more important as a haven for local wildlife.</p> <p><b>Red Lodge Heath Conservation Group</b>  Up to 2010 the heath had been used for off-road motor-cycling, and fly-tipping. Local residents, supported by Natural England and members of the parish Council, formed the Red Lodge Conservation Group to address these issues and improve the site for the benefit of wildlife and the community. With the support of the main landowner of the site, Upton Suffolk Farms Limited, funding from a Higher Level Stewardship Scheme and grants from the National Lottery Awards for All Scheme and the Parish Council, many improvements have been made. Twenty tons of waste, five of which were toxic, were removed from the site, which was enclosed by fencing. This has eliminated motor cycle and quad bike activity, creating a peaceful and safe environment. The Conservation Group worked to remove scrub, improve the grassland, and maintain good access on paths. Steps have been constructed to improve access through the woodland. Annual mowing controls the growth of bracken. Information boards have been installed on the site. Surveys of the site made by Natural England in 2024 recorded 627 species of invertebrate and assessed its condition was favourable although vulnerable as it is surrounded by housing. A report made by West Suffolk Council in 2024 on visitor impact on sites in the area concluded that Red Lodge Heath would not sustain more intense use without deterioration to the environment. The Conservation Group holds regular work parties throughout the year and would like to encourage more residents to join them, particularly as they are a very small group engaged in conservation work. As the members are now well into retirement age a new generation needs to be recruited to continue the good work that has been achieved on the site. The Red Lodge Conservation Group would appreciate any assistance the Parish Council could provide to promote its work and encourage new members.</p>	
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	<p><b>The following report was read out on behalf of the Conservation Group:</b></p> <p>The Red Lodge Conservation Group has continued its regular programme of work parties (weather permitting) on Red Lodge Heath SSSI. The winter storms brought down some trees and branches and the group cleared the obstructions from footpaths. They cleared invasive bracken from the area where Breckland Thyme grows and there has been increased coverage of this local speciality with its bright purple flowers in June. The group mows parts of the grassland to increase the spread of wildflowers and removes litter and fly-tipped items from the site. The group aims to support the biodiversity of the site and make it a pleasant area for visitors to enjoy spending time in nature.</p> <p>However, over the year some concerning issues have occurred.</p> <p>The group is concerned that the contractor employed by the major landowner of the SSSI (Upton Suffolk Farms) to mow the bracken from the grassland has destroyed areas of bramble and gorse which provided a habitat and food supply for insects and birds such as nightingales.</p> <p>The horse gate at the Turnpike Road end of the bridleway has mainly collapsed, bringing down a section of the boundary post and rail fencing. The group has mentioned this to their link contacts at West Suffolk County Council, but has had no contact with them since September 2024. The District Council has been engaged with conversations with Hugo Upton on the possibility of leasing the SSSI which might release some Section 106 funding to improve the site and lead to the employment of a ranger which could reduce anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>The group was interested to read the results of a survey conducted for West Suffolk County Council the effects of visitor impact and recreational use on various wildlife sites in the local area. It showed that Red Lodge Heath SSSI cannot sustain more impact without detriment to the wildlife. It would benefit the site if more provision for recreational activities such as dog-walking and cycling were included in the future development of Red Lodge.</p> <p>Another challenge faced by the group is its small size. Only a few people are engaged in practical conservation work, and they are well into retirement age and facing health issues. Unless new recruits can be added the Conservation Group faces an uncertain future.</p> <p>Many visitors to Red Lodge Heath express their appreciation for the group's efforts, and with the support and involvement of the community Red Lodge Heath SSSI will remain a valuable open space and haven for wildlife.</p> <p>The Chairman of the Parish Council agreed to contact Mr. Upton, to express the group's concerns.</p> <p><b>Noted</b></p>	Clerk
8.	<p><b>Confirmation of the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2024.</b></p> <p>The Minutes for the above meeting were agreed as accurate records and duly signed by the Chairman.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p>	

<b>9.</b>	<b>Public Session – General questions and discussion</b>  A member of the public requested contact details for the Red Lodge Conservation Group. <b>Noted</b>	SD
<b>10.</b>	<b>Confirmation of the date for the next Annual Parish Meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2026.</b>  The date for the meeting above was confirmed as above. <b>Resolved</b>	Clerk
<b>11.</b>	There being no further business the meeting closed at 19:36	

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