Shadingfield, Sotterley, Willingham, and Ellough Joint Parish Council

Minutes of the Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting
held at Shadingfield Village Hall on Wednesday 26th August 2026 at 7.00 pm

Present:
Councillors: Cllr R. Ellis (Chair), Cllr C. Ellis, Cllr A. Chipperfield, Cllr V. Keable, Cllr K. Robson and Cllr J. Sheldrake and Cllr D. Drane.

In attendance:
V. Ellis (Clerk)

26.076 Apologies for Absence:
None

26.077 Chair's acceptance of office:

Cllr R. Ellis formally accepted the role of Chair and signed the declaration of acceptance of office.

26.078 Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations:
None

26.079 Playing Field – Terms of Licence:

The Chair welcomed Councillors to the extraordinary meeting.

The Chair outlined the history of negotiations with Sotterley Estate regarding the playing field noting that it is currently used under a licence which is terminable by either party with two months' notice. The Parish Council cannot secure external funding without a lease providing security of tenure. Sotterley Estate have declined to remove the break clause from proposed lease drafts, preventing funding applications.

The Chair referred to the play equipment inspection that took place in June 2026; this confirmed the equipment was unsafe and led to the removal of the equipment. Without a lease, the Parish Council cannot pursue funding to replace the equipment. The ongoing maintenance costs of the playing field were discussed.

Councillors discussed options for the future of the playing field including:

- Continuing under the existing licence
- Seeking to purchase the land
- Issuing formal notice to terminate the licence

Key points raised included the need to safeguard public funds, the ACV status of the playing field, and the community value of the land.

Cllr C. Ellis proposed issuing formal notice to terminate the licence of the playing field, effective of 30th November 2026, while stating the Parish Council would re-open negotiations if Sotterley Estate reviewed their position to offer security of tenure or consider purchasing the land if Sotterley Estate wished to sell.

Proposed by Cllr C. Ellis and seconded by Cllr J. Sheldrake and RESOLVED: the Parish Council will issue a formal notice letter to Sotterley Estate. This would be circulated in draft to all Councillors prior to issue to enable each Councillor to contribute to this correspondence.

Chair _____ Date _____

26.080	Council Operations: Payment of outstanding invoices: Proposed by Cllr R. Ellis, and seconded by Cllr C. Ellis, and RESOLVED: That the payments listed in Appendix 1 be authorised. Cllr C. Ellis noted that an invoice related to picnic expenses would be reimbursed to herself and highlighted that she would have to authorise the payment. The Council unanimously agreed for Cllr C. Ellis to approve the online banking payments.
26.081	Planning: DC/26/0999/FUL – Spring Park Cllr C. Ellis informed the Council that the application was being referred to the Planning Committee, as the Parish Council comments were contrary to the officer recommendation of approval. At the referral panel it was agreed by the Chair and Vice Chair of both Development Control Committees, that the application should be referred to planning committee for further consideration. It is anticipated that the application will go before the planning committee on the 8th September 2026. Cllr C. Ellis, who is unable to attend on that day, invited councillors to attend the committee meeting on behalf of the Parish Council. Cllr V. Keable offered to attend the meeting, and the Clerk will provide her with information about the application. DC/26/2822/FUL – Lodge Farm Cottages, London Road. The application is considered consistent with the Neighbourhood Development Plan. The Council unanimously agreed to support the application. Proposed by Cllr R. Ellis and seconded by Cllr A. Chipperfield.
26.082	The meeting closed at 8.50pm
	Date of next meeting: Wednesday 16th September 2026

Appendix 1 – Payments Authorised

V. Ellis	Salary August	422.75
Cllr J. Sheldrake	Picnic Flyers	75.00
Chevron J. London	Supply of music for the picnic	101.03
Chevron J. London	Removal of play equipment	100.00
Cllr C. Ellis	Food & Beverage for the picnic	440.70

Chair _____ Date _____