



Minutes of Dedham Parish Council meeting

27th July 2026 6:30pm at Duchy Barn

Extraordinary Meeting Minutes

Attendee: Cllrs Bourn, Beeton, Andrews, Halsall, Harrison, Haines, McLaughlin

Present: Clerk
15 members of the public

26/94 Welcome by the Chairman and apologies for absence received.
Cllr Bourn welcomed everyone to the meeting.
Apologies from Cllr Main and Cllr Sneddon.

26/95 Declaration of Interests.
Councillors to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests relevant to this agenda. Note; Interests may also be declared at any point in the meeting where they become apparent.

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Cllr. Beeton stated that she again wished to declare, for reasons of transparency, that she lived close to the playing field and because her ability to vote had been questioned by a member of the football club at the last meeting, she wished to read out a statement summarising "Advice on Managing Conflict of Interests on Small Parish Councils". This advice (attached to these notes) has been forwarded to EALC for confirmation.

No other declarations arose.

26/96 Approve the minutes of the meeting on 20th July 2026

These had not yet been approved so could not be circulated and agreed. One of the items at this meeting was to consider obtaining legal advice from solicitors regarding the playing field, which is the reason for this meeting.

26/97 Arising from minute 26/93 of the Meeting held on 20th July – Proposal to seek legal advice regarding the Parish Council’s ownership of the Football Field in Dedham.

This was discussed and there were comments from the public.

26/98 Public Session: Members of the public to be able to comment on the action proposed under item 26/97

It was noted that individuals retain the right to agree or disagree with proposals, and it was questioned whether equal consideration should be given to all responses. Clarification was sought regarding a statement that one individual had been informed that a particular action was acceptable. This led to a wider discussion about the management and use of the playing field, rather than its ownership.

It was confirmed that the matter will be referred to the Parish Council's solicitors for formal written legal advice. Subject to any legal confidentiality, the Council will seek to ensure transparency by clarifying what aspects of the advice, including associated legal costs, can be shared with councillors and the public.

It was also confirmed that the Parish Council owned the playing field

Residents raised questions regarding whether the football club’s representative has any third-party rights over the playing field and also whether the covenant in the 1943 transfer deed was still legally enforceable.

The Council agreed that clear legal guidance is required to determine the position regarding the use of the playing field by any club, with clarity on the rights, responsibilities and any applicable restrictions being of paramount importance.

No comments were raised from residents not to spend the money on legal advice.

26/99 Chairs Closure of meeting to public

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Chairs Closure of meeting to public at 8: 18 pm

Closed Session under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 to exclude the public and press for the following item due to the confidential nature of the business regarding legal advice for the council.

26/100 Agreement of the letter of instruction to solicitors

Draft instruction had been produced by Cllrs McLaughlin and Beeton with additional comments from Cllr Main. This draft had been circulated and was scheduled for discussion tonight.

26/101 To Consider quotes from solicitors;

To note that the council agreed to appoint Fisher Joes Greenwood as their solicitors.

The meeting closed at **8:13 pm**.

Signed

Cllr Beeton

Date