

Clerk report

August 2025

AGAR

The AGAR submitted on 30th June 2025 was rejected by the external auditors – PKF – because the incorrect form was submitted.

I submitted form AGAR Form 3PM whereas I should have submitted AGAR Form 3.

A revised form was signed by myself and the Chair and submitted mid July. The revised form has been accepted by PKF.

PKF will now review the submission. The requirement for an additional review in addition to the review completed by Heelis & Lodge is that Drinkstone's income exceeded £25,000 and we do not qualify for automatic audit exemption.

It is highly unlikely that any additional questions will be raised.

The revised AGAR is shown as Agenda Item 3.8.2 and needs to be ratified.

Funds

| | |
|-----------------|------------|
| Current account | £70.05 |
| Savings account | £29,078.03 |
| Total monies | £29,148.03 |

Interest received in the period to 31st August 2025 is £169.10.

Sapphire have not yet invoiced for Rattlesden Road fencing – cost to PC is £2,960.

We have an unrecovered VAT debtor of £2,786 – the rebate request will be made once Sapphire have invoiced.

Unutilised CIL monies – after Rattlesden Road fencing costs but before Gedding Road expense stand at £6,469.04

Net PC funds, excluding CIL after accounting for August expenses and including VAT recovery, stands at £19,113.

Parishioner comments

I have received correspondence concerning grass cuttings left in the stream at Blacksmith Corner. Correspondence is shown in Appendix 1.

Parishioner has requested the PC contact Suffolk to request stream clearance.

I posted comment on the Solar Farm consultation at the request of a parishioner.

“I’ve had a look at the proposal to close footpath 4 during the construction. It's not ideal and usually the footpath would be diverted. I note that they state that in this case a diversion is not possible. I am not aware that this particular section of path is heavily used, so to have a banksman posted at each end all day to ensure a few users safety seems a bit much. I would hope that MSDC make sure that the path cannot be re-routed before agreeing to any closure. Regards – Drinkstone Parish Clerk”

Allotments

Peter Holborn has requested that the PC funds arborial work at the Rattlesden Road allotment site. Cost anticipated to be circa £750.00. Peter has offered to secure a quote. I request that we agree a spend up to £800 so that the work can be undertaken without a requirement to convene a PC meeting before our next scheduled meeting November 2025.

Allotment charity.

The charity retains funds of circa £1,600 with a committed spend of £250 for new gate at Gedding Road.

The trustees (Lambert, Youngs and Turner) are considering whether to wind up the charity however concerns have been expressed as to what happens to the charity’s monies.

My question to SALC was:

Drinkstone PC owns the allotments. The allotments are currently run as a charity under separate stewardship, with one trustee mandated to be a cllr. We are considering closing the charity and transferring funds to the PC which is obligated to manage the land anyway. A concern has been raised that if, in the event of the Drinkstone PC closing down through lack of support - and merging with Woolpit for example - would the funds that had previously been in control of the allotment trustees remain ringfenced or merged with the larger council.

SALC response

I assume that if the charity is closed and its funds are transferred to the Parish Council, those funds will be ringfenced in a designated reserve to ensure they continue to be used for their original purpose.

Did the charity have a separate bank account and were the councillors, acting as charity trustees, involved in decision-making and the general management of the allotments?

If the allotment funds are clearly identified and ringfenced for a specific purpose, that restriction can and should be maintained even if the Parish Council later merges with another authority. However, without clear documentation and restrictions, there is a risk the funds could be absorbed into the wider finances of the successor council.

To safeguard the funds:

Formally minute the transfer and the council's intention to preserve that purpose. Clearly set up the earmarked reserve within the council's accounts.

The Charity Commission may also be able to offer guidance as part of the charity closure process.

Michael Walton

Clerk & RFO

3rd August 2025

drinkstoneclerk@gmail.com

From: John Sanderson <jasanderson1955@gmail.com>
Sent: 02 August 2025 17:13
To: drinkstoneclerk@gmail.com
Subject: FW: Grass cuttings in stream
Attachments: 20250802_161301.jpg; 1000047421.jpg

ATTENTION OF CLERK OF DRINKSTONE PARISH COUNCIL MICHAEL WALTON

RE: STREAM RUNNING DOWN SIDE OF THE STREET PASSING WHITEGATE COTTAGE / TANWOOD / OLD POST OFFICE, DRINKSTONE.

Dear Michael,

Following on from our Telephone conversation, we have lived at Whitegate Cottage for 4 years now, and nearly every winter the Stream opposite Floods normally once and sometimes twice during the winter period. Where Tony and Merete live and Nick and Jane live the road and ground level is higher so they do not suffer the flooding, whereas we are much lower, located in a dip in the road; so all 4 Houses here (Whitegate Cottage, Tanwood, Old Post Office, and where Robin lives) all suffer from the flooding, especially down towards the bridge going off to Woolpit.

I see the Contractor / Grass Cutter strimming the river-bank each summer, often cutting the grass and leaving it there. But this time; it seems an excessive amount of Grass has gone into the stream. Both Tony and i have said year after year, that the Stream needs dredging out, which would help the flow of water and reduce the risk of flooding. "But nobody will take responsibility". Obviously due to the cost of the work. So clearly nothing will ever be done, and the road will continue to flood and both our House and Tanwood will lose most of our gravel, which last time was dragged half way down the road by the wash every time a lorry or car went by. So it costs us every time in replacing the lost gravel. Now i have had to go to the expense of putting down block paviors at the entrance; as the flood waters cannot wash them away; unlike Tanwood that gets hit every time.

But what concerns me is that the Contract Worker, whoever it was, on this occasion seemed to leave a huge amount of Grass Cuttings in the Stream which will block it up further, and if the structure of the stream is totally blocked up with debris / silt / grass cuttings and vegetation; it is pretty obvious the flood waters will spill out onto the road even more. So all i am asking is ; as you are the Clerk of the Parish Council, can you possibly find out who is hiring this specific Contractor, and Instruct the Contractor to KINDLY STOP letting all the Grass Cuttings and Cut Vegetation fall into the Stream. I have attached 2 photos, and will send a couple more. At the end of the day, the Contractor does not suffer the Flooding, nor does anyone else further up the road; it is only our 4 Houses that take the brunt of the Flooding, and it does not help the situation; if the Grass Cutter / Contractor is allowing the Grass Cuttings to fill up the Stream, each and every time he cuts the river bank each year; especially this year which seems a lot worse than normal.

You mentioned that it is really Suffolk County Highways that are financially responsible to Dredge the River / Stream. Well they may take a few years to get round to doing anything; as you said, but it would be better if the Parish Council Requested the work to be done; and then maybe in 3 or 4 years time they might get around to dredging out the stream. It might be a long wait; "but at least they would carry out the work eventually."

If nothing is done, and nobody highlights this problem to the Highways Authority, the Flooding will always continue. Speaking on behalf of all the 4 Houses on this stretch of road, it would also help if you can tell the Contractor or the people that hire the Contractor, to stop allowing the Grass Cuttings to fill up the ditch / stream. It would at least help. "They are not affected we are". Thank you for listening to our concern.

Kind Regards John