

## **Denham Parish Council – Explanation for “No” Response to Question 3 of the Annual Governance Statement**

Denham Parish Council answered “No” to Question 3 of the Annual Governance Statement, which asks whether the authority took all reasonable steps to assure itself that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations, and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial impact on the authority’s ability to conduct its business or manage its finances.

At the Council meeting held on 5th November 2024, two members of the public were co-opted onto the Council, bringing the number of members closer to its full complement. As there were three vacancies and only two applicants, no vote was required, and the appointments were made without contest. However, it was later identified that, due to the Council not being quorate at the time, these appointments were not legally valid. As a result, any decisions made at this meeting, as well as those taken at subsequent meetings on 21st January 2025 and 18th March 2025—where a further co-option occurred—were also invalid.

This issue was highlighted in the Internal Auditor’s report for the 2024/2025 financial year.

The Council took prompt action to rectify the error at its Annual Parish Council Meeting held on 21st May 2025. Mid Suffolk District Councillor Matthew Hicks joined the meeting to act as the third member of the Council, thereby restoring quorum. The Council then ratified the co-options made at the meetings in November 2024 and March 2025, and confirmed the decisions taken at those meetings and at the January 2025 meeting. These actions were agreed unanimously.

The rectification process and associated decisions are recorded in the draft minutes of the 21st May 2025 meeting, under minute references 1, 8(a)iii, and 8(b). These can be accessed on our website:

<https://denhamparishcouncil.gov.uk/assets/Uploads/Draft-mins-21st-May-2025.pdf>

Denham Parish Council would like to formally state that the co-option decisions made in November 2024 were taken in good faith. At the time, the Council was unaware that it was not acting within its legal powers or in accordance with Proper Practices.

**Wendy Alcock**

**Parish Clerk / Responsible Finance Officer**