

Wickhambrook Parish Council

Minutes

Of an Extraordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on Thursday 6th November 2025

Present: A Grimes, K Grimes, M Karunaratne (Chair), M Lavelle, L Smith

Hilary Workman, Clerk; Mitch Karunaratne and Amanda Lavelle of Wickhambrook WI, SC Cllr Bobby Bennett and WS Cllr Sarah Pugh

EO.25.11.01 **Noted:** The following apologies for absence:

- Cllr Tracey Turner – Annual leave - approved

EO.25.11.02 **Noted:** That when invited, the following:

- 2.1 Members' Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and/or Other Registerable Interests in subsequent Agenda items
 - Agenda Item EO.25.11.5.2 – Cllrs Andrea and Kevin Grimes - DPI
 - Agenda Item EO.25.11.07 – Cllr Linda Smith – ORI
- 2.2 No declarations of lobbying for planning matters on the agenda their nature, including gifts of hospitality exceeding £25
- 2.3 No requests for dispensations
- 2.4 Additions and/or deletions to the Council's Register of Interests.
 - Cllr Tracey Turner

EO.25.11.03 **Noted:** Public Forum – (**Open Session**)¹. 19:11

That when comment or questions on any Agenda Item or matter of concern from those members of the public present were invited, the following:

Agenda Item EO.25.11.07

Amanda Lavelle (AL) of the Women's Institute (WI) reported that the WI would like to know whether the parish council would wish to accept their help in terms of planting the site between tennis courts and bowling green in order to further develop the proposed wildlife area there.

In response to questions from and concerns raised by councillors (including that from Cllr A Grimes, who acknowledged that the proposal was a lovely idea, but was concerned about the possible future workload which may fall on the parish council if enthusiasm for the project were to wane, and that there was a risk that councillors could not take on additional responsibilities without the risk of burnout), she and her colleague, Mitch Karunaratne (MK) advised that:

- The WI had wanted to add value to an existing project of the parish council (the setting aside of wildlife areas within its existing open spaces)
- The woodland trust had advised that if planted at the right time (late autumn/winter), the saplings shouldn't need watering and should be self sufficient
- They had a lot of saplings, sufficient that the proposed planting would allow for a failure of some of the saplings
- There was an annual commitment from the WI to engage in activities

¹ The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with standing order 3(e) shall not exceed 15 minutes unless directed by the chairman of the meeting.

Signed: Tracey Turner

Dated: 27/11/2025

- Successful recruitment to volunteer events could be dependant on how events were promoted. There was currently enthusiasm within the WI to support the proposed wildlife planting, with 15 members keen to participate in planting. Next year is Wickhambrook WI's centenary year.
- The WI members and their committee were aware of enthusiasm for such a project in the village
- Some of the original blackthorn planting had been taken out as they had identified that there was a lot of this species already in the hedgerow. Unused blackthorn saplings could be used elsewhere across the parish.
- Ideally, the WI would like to move to Phase II, the planting of a small number of orchard trees (approximately the size of the cherry trees in the cemetery) in their centenary year (2026).

Session Closed: 19:26

In accordance with Standing Order 10(a)vi, item 25.02.12 on the Agenda was considered at this point and is Minuted at 25.11.07.

EO.25.11.04 **Noted:** Reports from Representatives of the Council on External bodies, Ward Members and other external bodies as appropriate.

4.1 Cllr Mrs Bobby Bennett, Suffolk County Council

An oral update advising that:

- The next budget, including the social care budget, was being prepared
- SCC's business case for Local government reform (single unitary) had been submitted to the Minister
- The Pot hole repair programme (this was a winter activity) was starting – it was important to encourage residents to report every pot hole through the interactive reporting tool.
- Byeway 31 – ProW now had two quotes and she would escalate progress on this work
- She had recently complained to Anglian water about the frequent leaks in the area which were resulting in road closures and extensive diversions (Cllr A Grimes advised that the Culvert at Stradishall Junction was not draining properly, resulting in frequent flooding
- A recent meeting of parish councils in West Suffolk with respect to road safety had taken place
- County money was available if a project were to be identified.

Cllr Bennett left the meeting

4.2 Cllr Mrs Sarah Pugh, West Suffolk Council (previously circulated)

Who further advised that:

- Financial consequences to parishes of losing the roadside recycling had been considered by West Suffolk and accommodated through a two year phase out of recycling credits (a number of parish councils were identifying replacement sources of income, e.g. Whepstead were generating solar power for vehicle charging points)
- West Suffolk was working on the basis that county elections would take place alongside Mayoral elections, but that this wouldn't be finalised until February
- Community rest centre training, aimed at parish council's with responsibilities for emergency planning, was scheduled for 18th November at Haverhill Arts Centre.

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- Homelessness – WS Council are keen to make people aware of a central website for referrals – street.link.org.uk, a multi-agency hub. Currently there are only 4 habitual rough sleepers in West Suffolk
- There was some locality funding still available and Cllr Pugh keen to assist parishes in project that increase engagement and reach (e.g. parish notice boards for more remote parts of a parish)
- West Suffolk responsible for community governance arrangements – this presents an opportunity to raise questions or issues about governance arrangements at parish level, with a review being carried out in December
- Mark Walsh had responded with respect to the previous enquiry regarding posts at Clopton Green. The meeting asked the clerk to circulate the response.

Cllr Pugh left the meeting

EO.25.11.05 The meeting considered and determined responses to the planning applications listed below as notified by West Suffolk Council for comment.

5.1 [DC/25/1477/FUL](#) - Planning application

One Dwelling

Homeleigh House Thorns Corner Wickhambrook CB8 8XW

See planning report

The meeting considered this application and having taken into account:

- 1) The application and additional supporting documents available on West Suffolk's planning portal
- 2) A briefing paper ([WPC/25.11/DC/25/1477](#)) prepared by the clerk
- 3) And having referred to the objectives set out in Wickhambrook Parish Council's Referendum Neighbourhood Plan (for which West Suffolk Council has confirmed that under Planning guidance, as a plan awaiting referendum, can be given significant weight in decision-making) and identified no items of concern, determined to raise no objections to the application.

Having declared an interest in the following item, Cllrs A and K Grimes left the meeting

5.2 [DC/25/1545/HH](#)- Householder planning application

Single Storey Extension

3 Bury Road Wickhambrook CB8 8PE

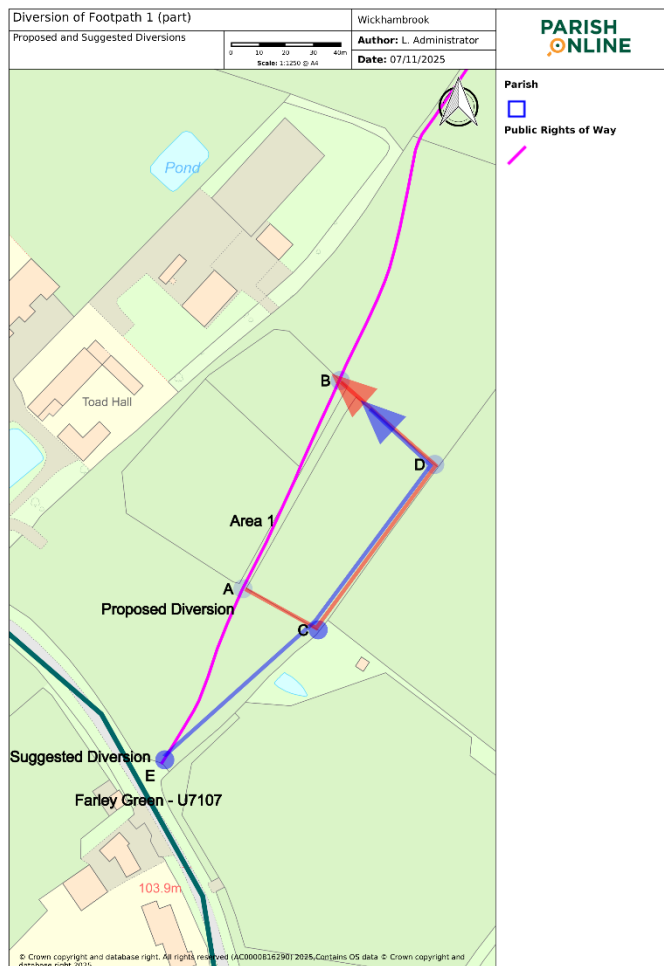
The meeting considered this application had no objections

Cllrs A and K Grimes rejoined the meeting

5.3 Resolved:

That the Clerk make known the Council's comments on planning applications above to the Corporate Manager, Growth & Sustainable Planning at West Suffolk Council.

EO.25.11.06 The meeting considered a Proposed Diversion of Wickhambrook Public Footpath 1 (part) (previously circulated as [WPC.EO.25.11.01](#)) and, noting that it had no objections to the proposed diversion of Public Footpath 1 (part), considered that a more logical diversionary route would be to follow the hedgerow from point E to C initially.



Having declared an interest in the following item, Cllr L Smith left the meeting

EO.25.11.07 **Noted:**

The meeting considered a proposal to develop a wildlife area at Six Acres (previously circulated as [WPC.EO.25.11.02](#)) and, having taken into account the presentation by members of the WI, and their responses to questions and concerns raised about the proposal under public forum (Minuted under 25.11.03), and the following points identified by councillors:

- The sapplings for the planting scheme were being provided by the WI at no cost to the parish council
- That it was difficult to quantify additional future costs at this stage, but that this could be monitored and any necessary adjustments to the budget agreed by the parish council – as noted by Cllr A Grimes this may result in an increased precept to accommodate any additional costs
- If there were no public interest in supporting the maintenance of this wildlife area 10 years down the line, then parish council could look at reverting to traditional open space (recognising that this too would incur a cost).

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- Additional planting in this wildlife area would underpin objectives and community actions set out in the Parish Referendum Neighbourhood Plan
- Concerns about future resource implications for the parish council if community interest and support of the project were to wane over time were sufficiently allayed, and the it was agreed that the parish council was minded to accept the offer from the WI for the planting of native hedging at Wildlife Area 1 (between the Tennis Courts and Bowling Green), and:
1. That the likelihood of additional resources in respect of:
 - a. Ongoing tree work (from years 3 onwards)
 - b. Additional water supply in the event of drought before any additional water collection can be installed under phase II
 - c. Officer time to support community engagement, resourcing etc. be monitored over the next financial year and the clerk make an estimate of likely adjustments to budget lines in the draft budget to be considered at the scheduled November meeting
 2. To facilitate communication and foster co-production of the project, the parish council invite a member of the WI to join the Estates Committee as a lay member (it having already identified that a biodiversity portfolio would be beneficial to support the objectives and policies of the Referendum Neighbourhood Plan, and there being a vacancy)
 3. The timescale for considering implementation of phase II would be Autumn '26

CLlr L Smith rejoined the meeting

EO.25.11.08 Noted:

The meeting considered implications of SAAAP Assertion 10 (previously circulated as [WPC.EO.25.11.03](#)) and in order to ensure that the parish council is able to meet the requirements of SAAAP Assertion 10 in advance of the 20256/26 audit, the parish council agreed:

1. To consider and adopt a draft IT Policy at its next scheduled meeting (27th November)
2. That Parish Online be chosen as the provider for the new .gov.uk website with associated e-mails and cloud storage for the following reasons:
 - a. The parish council already sources its mapping through Parish Online and it is a known entity with reliable support
 - b. Parish online is a Community Interest Company (not for profit) which serves only parish councils (it currently supports over 1000 websites)
 - c. The costs fall within the existing budget remaining to current year end
 - d. The clerk has reasonable confidence that the supplier will be able to meet its projected timeline for completion of the project
 - e. The website uses a stripped back version of Word Press, which the clerk is familiar with
 - f. The site provides for direct access to free from copyright images for news items
 - g. There is a possibility that Planning tracker will come on stream at some point in the future (no extra costs are attached to new features)
 - h. Future costs are anticipated to be less than that currently budgeted for
3. Where permissible and feasible within the terms of a .gov.uk domain, support existing community groups with forwarding e-mail accounts through role based e-mails with the new provider, or consider alternative arrangements at the scheduled November meeting.

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EO.25.11.09 **Noted:** That when any other matters for information, to be noted or for inclusion on a future agenda were invited, the following:

- Draft Budget
- Cemetery Regulations, Fees and Charges
- IT Policy
- Procurement policy
- Reduction of Speed limit at A143 Wickham Street

EO.25.11.10 **Noted:** That the scheduled date for the next meeting is Thursday 27th November beginning at 7:00pm at Pavilion, Wickhambrook Memorial Social Centre.

EO.25.11.11 **Noted:** Close of meeting 20:11

Signed: Tracey Turner

Dated: 27/11/2025