

## Wickhambrook Parish Council (WPC)

### Minutes

Of an Extraordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2025

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

Hilary Workman, Clerk; Denbury Homes – Rob Eburne

14 Members of the public

EO.25.12.01 **Noted:** There were no apologies for absence to note or approve.

EO.25.12.02 **Noted:** That when invited, there were

- 2.1 No Members' Declarations of Local Non-Pecuniary Interests Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and/or Other Registerable Interests in subsequent Agenda items
- 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 No additions and/or deletions to the Council's Register of Interests.

EO.25.12.03 **Noted:** Public Forum – (**Open Session**)<sup>1</sup>. 18:34

**Cllr Lavelle** welcomed members of the public and Rob Eburne of Denbury Homes, and advised that the Wickhambrook Neighbourhood Plan (WNP) had been approved at referendum on 13<sup>th</sup> November. He explained that the plan (which includes the site at Bunters Road allocated by West Suffolk Council (WSC) under its Local Plan (for around 40 homes) plan sets the tone and guidelines for development in the parish to 2041. Approximately half an hour would be allocated to members of the public for comments and questions on agenda items (extended under Standing Orders from the usual 15 minutes).

**Rob Eburne**, Planning Manager at Denbury homes briefly summarised the Hybrid application, explaining that an outline application applies to the commercial element of the site and that once commercial areas had signed up, more details and full application would follow. He explained that:

- He expects WSC to deal with this application over the next few months (a similar planning application at Clare had taken about 9 months) and that he anticipated that this application would come back to WPC to take account of comments.
- The application (DC/25/1736/HYB) is based on the Local Plan allocated site (AP52) of around 40 homes and concept plan. It allows for open space to the south, single storey properties alongside bunters road and a broad mix of housing size and tenure. The WNP housing needs survey assessed that smaller homes were needed in the parish and the application includes 40 % 1 & 2 bedroom and 40% affordable housing for those in housing need, which complies with WSC guidelines on housing mix.
- The application has to deal with the wider impacts of the proposal such as social infrastructure - new population can help support existing facilities within a parish. An agreement between WSC and SCC (s.106) is used to make sure that the developer pays for the impacts of the development (e.g. on schools, NHS, roads, frontage, and connectivity).
- An NP is a really good thing to have at this moment in that it prevents aggressive development proposals. Denbury Homes is trying to deliver what is required in the WNP and West Suffolk Local Plan.

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<sup>1</sup> 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:** 15/01/2026

- As a developer, they also have to comply with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which sets out policies and guidelines on issues such as biodiversity, car parking standards, etc.
- The WNP policy of Dark Skies had been noted and outside lighting would be limited
- Denbury Homes will maintain dialogue after any planning application is approved.
- The affordable housing element is linked to local need by means of a cascade principle, prioritising people that live local to Wickhambrook, or have left and seeking to return, then neighbouring parishes before the wider district. In this way it matches local needs.
- They anticipated the application being considered at WSC planning committee in February/March. WSC were bound to approve applications which accord with Local and Neighbourhood Plans.

**Cllr Lavelle** invited members of the public to submit their views on the application directly to West Suffolk Council as part of the planning process.

**(Open Session)<sup>2</sup>. 18:34 18:49:**

That when comments or question on any Agenda item or matter of concern from those members of the public present were invited, the following (with responses in italics):

- Why take down an established hedge down and then put it back in?  
*RB: The county council will insist on safe access point 2.4 m back from the highway, with a splay to ensure adequate visibility (the hedgerow will be in the way of the visibility splay). Once established, they will then replant behind the visibility splay. An example is the new development in Clare.*
- There is already chaos with traffic on the B1063, particularly at school drop off times – what provisions will there be to accommodate additional traffic arising from 43 homes?  
*RB: The Traffic assessment looks at the peak moments people are on the road network – Suffolk County Council (SCC) vet the assessment to see if it is safe and operates in capacity of existing road networks. It looks at evidence from existing sites and then applies that to the proposed development. SCC look at any measures to slow traffic down and improve safety and the proposals currently include two crossing points. If SCC ask for something (for example, widening footways), the developer will have to provide it under s.278. – e.g. widen footpaths.*
- At the moment there is a major problem with school traffic on Shop Hill and in the vicinity of the school and this can only get worse.  
*Cllr M Lavelle: The parish council has a Community Speedwatch volunteer team and uses Vehicle Activated Speed (VAS) monitors. The most recent monitoring at Bunters Road (November/December) demonstrate that the 30mph speed limit is regularly exceeded (an 85%ile speed of 37mph and a maximum speed at mid-afternoon of 75mph being recorded. WPC would expect that the Department of Transport (DoT) Local Transport Note L1/07 be used to determine appropriate traffic calming measures*  
*RE: acknowledged the traffic issues reported and advised that it was often difficult to get SCC to do stuff, but that if traffic calming is required (by SCC), the developer will have to implement it.*
- Attleton Green –flooding is an ongoing issue at Attleton, with all contours (from the development) going down towards it. The view of residents is that the proposals are inadequate to cope with a really big storm. Any more development is likely to make flooding at Attleton Green even worse.  
*RE – the development proposal contains a drainage scheme*

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- Flood risk assessment referred to recent floods as an anomaly – this in residents views is not the case. Attleton Green has recently been upgraded to a flood risk – how will this be addressed? Residents also reported their concerns about the risk of foul water draining from the proposed development backing up into Attleton Green.  
*RE - Developer responsibility is to not cause flooding of the site and not cause flooding elsewhere.*
- In the event that drainage basin identified on the site plan is filled where is that water going to go? And what facilities can be provided in the green open space given that it is set aside for water overflow and will become a pond in wet weather?
- Residents reported concerns with respect to the safety of the junction at Thorn's corner (another cyclist had been injured only this evening – no other vehicle having been involved) and that the pavement from Thorns Corner west on Bunters Road was too narrow – it is not possible to walk with dogs, push chairs, prams or wheelchairs and buggies for the elderly.  
*Cllr M Lavelle - emphasised that residents should submit their concerns directly to West Suffolk and refer to the WNP.*
- Concern was raised as to whether there would be capacity at the Doctors' Surgery (which already suffered from congestion in the vicinity and limited parking). When the Meadows development was approved there was a proposal to move the surgery to the meadow below the development which did not take place. Since then, the surgery has taken more patients from a surgery in Haverhill which closed, further limiting its capacity.  
*RE – The NHS is a consultee and will calculate how much additional capacity would cost which is then built into the s.106 agreement.*
- Can you guarantee that 40% affordable homes will be built?  
*RE – It is legal requirement. Planning authorities have refused permission to dispense with affordable homes. It is the responsibility of WS to nominate local connections.*
- Residents were concerned as to the extent of West Suffolk Council's influence on the development due to the proposed Local Government Reorganization.

**Public forum closed 19:19**

**Residents left the meeting.**

- EO.25.12.04 **Noted:** That when reports from Representatives of the Council on External bodies, Ward Members and other external bodies as appropriate, were invited, there being none present, the meeting moved to the next agenda item.  
4.1Cllr Mrs Bobby Bennett, Suffolk County Council (previously circulated)  
4.2Cllr Mrs Sarah Pugh, West Suffolk Council

**EO.25.12.05 Noted:**

The meeting considered and determine a response to the planning applications listed below as notified by West Suffolk Council for comment.

5.1 [DC/25/1736/HYB](#) – Hybrid Planning application

- a) Planning application – 43 dwellings with access, roads, parking, garages, public open space and associated infrastructure
- b) Outline planning application (all matters reserved) for commercial use and associated parking (class E)

**Location Land Off Bunters Road Wickhambrook Suffolk**

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 (**Report WPC/EO/25.12/DC/25/1736/HYB**) prepared by the clerk
- 3) The presentation by Mr Rob Eburne of Denbury Homes (the applicant) with supporting Question and Answer notes, Planning Layout and Street Scenes, provided to residents at the meeting and attached as **Appendix A** to the minutes
- 4) Responses to questions from residents by the Mr Rob Eburn of Denbury Homes (the applicant), minuted at EO.25.12.03.
- 5) Concerns raised from councillors, with responses by Mr Rob Eburne of Denbury Homes (the applicant) in italics, below:
  - 5.1. Concern that there will not be enough parking spaces for visitors  
*Six visitor spaces are allocated across the site which meets the NPPF guidelines*
  - 5.2. What would the site and roads within it be called?  
*Denbury would happily consult on development and road naming*
  - 5.3. Cllrs reiterated concerns raised by residents regarding flooding issues and disposal of foul water.  
*Happy with scrutiny on the flooding issues*
  - 5.4. Would there be additional funding for primary school places?  
*SCC had advised that there would be funding for secondary school places but not primary school places*
  - 5.5. Will they be putting any funding into play areas?  
*The current guidelines state that for developments of 50 homes and over, developers would have to provide a play area. Funding for maintenance of existing areas could be considered.*
  - 5.6. In terms of affordable housing how does this work? The allocation for the site is not quite 40% (39.53%).  
*Market homes cross subsidise the affordable housing and the scheme is viable on this basis. There is a rounding payment made to WSC which goes towards their district wide affordable housing commitments where the affordable homes allocation below the 40%.*
  - 5.7. Who chooses the Housing Association  
*West Suffolk Council have a preferred list agreement with the developer*
  - 5.8. How does the Affordable housing allocation work?  
*Cascade allocation, based on connections with Wickhambrook, local parishes (but not urban areas) and finally West Suffolk, ensures that there is no hidden housing need.*
  - 5.9. The traffic congestion around school drop off and collection times on Shop is already an issue, there is a concern that construction vehicles can only make this worse.  
*There is Construction management plan (which sets out times of operation) which is then dealt with by means of planning condition.*
- 6) The following points identified by Cllrs at the meeting, who considered, based on the information available, whether the proposed development, if delivered in

accordance with the application, would support or undermine the Wickhambrook Neighbourhood Plan objectives and policies (identified in italics below) as approved at Referendum on 13<sup>th</sup> November 20255:

- 6.1. *Objective 1 - New development should minimise the loss of the best quality agricultural land and its impact on the natural and historic environment as well as being well related to the existing services and facilities in the village centre.*

**Proposals Support NP objectives and policies** - This development has been allocated in West Suffolk Council's Local Plan

- 6.2. *Objective 2 - New housing development will reflect Wickhambrook's status as a Local Service Centre within the "Settlement Hierarchy" of West Suffolk and provide a range of types, sizes, prices and tenures that meets the needs of all age groups and incomes.*

**Objectives and policies not supported by proposals**

**Policy WHB 2** – Land West of Bunters Road (2<sup>nd</sup> bullet point)

The housing needs survey which was undertaken as part of the preparation of Wickhambrook's Neighbourhood Plan identified that 35% of properties in Wickhambrook had 4 bedrooms or more compared with 22% across West Suffolk. This established a clear need for smaller properties within the parish.

The proposed development as submitted makes provision for 27% of properties being 4 bedroom or more, still well above the 22% district wide. The parish council considers that provision should be made for more smaller properties (three bedroom or less).

- 6.3. *Objective 3 - New housing should be located where it is safely accessible by foot to the village's services and facilities.*

**Objectives and policies not supported by proposals**

**Policy WHB 2** – Land West of Bunters Road (3<sup>rd</sup> bullet point)

Although two crossing points have been identified within the development proposal, the existing footways are too narrow to be safely used.

- 6.4. *Objective 4 - Homes should incorporate measures to ensure they are accessible for all needs, incorporate energy saving features and make use of sustainable approaches to building.*

**Proposals Support NP objectives and policies** –

**Policy WHB 3** – Housing Design Standards

The plans for the development show that the properties will not be reliant on fossil fuels (heated and powered by Air Source Heat Pumps, Solar Voltaic panels and electricity)

Certain properties (2) have been designed as meeting M43 standards. Disability spaces are provided (within curtilage of properties and visitor spaces (6) within the development.

**Policy WHB 4** – Low Energy and Energy Efficient Housing Design

No additional comments – a carbon efficient development

- 6.5. *Objective 5 - A range of employment opportunities in the Parish will be retained and supported where there will not be a detrimental impact on the environment, services and infrastructure.*

**Proposals Support NP objectives and policies** –

**Policy WHB 5** - Employment Sites

This is a hybrid application with the commercial use (employment) to be determined at a later date.

**Policy WHB 6** – New Businesses and Employment Development

- 6.6. **Objective 6** - *The rural character of the Parish will be protected and, where possible, enhanced*  
**Proposals Support NP objectives and policies –**  
**Policy WHB 7** - Protecting Wickhambrook's Landscape Character  
 There is green space and housing density is low. The application more or less mirrors original Site Masterplan.
- 6.7. **Objective 7** - *Natural habitats will be protected and enhanced.*  
**Proposals Support NP objectives and policies –**  
**Policy WHB 8** – Biodiversity and Habitats  
 The application makes provision for plus 10% biodiversity net gain, and the provision of bird and bat boxes within the development.  
**Policy WHB 9** – Local Green Spaces  
 No comments made
- 6.8. **Objective 8** - *Wickhambrook's built heritage assets will be protected.*  
**Proposals Support NP objectives and policies –**  
**Policy WHB 10** – Buildings and Structures of Local Significance  
 There is protection around the properties of local significance and bungalows nearer the road
- 6.9. **Objective 9** - *High-quality and eco-friendly development will reinforce the local character of the village.*  
**Objectives and policies not supported by proposals**  
**Policy WHB 11** – Development Design Considerations  
 The concern is the mitigation of flooding arising from the proposed development. Cllrs referred to paragraph K of the policy - which states that proposals will be supported where they:  
*Do not result in water run-off that would add to or create surface water flooding by including, as necessary, water features such as ponds, wetlands and streams etc to collect run off to alleviate the possibility of flooding on lower lying land;*  
 In this case, because of the risk to lower land at Attleton Green, the meeting considered that paragraph K could not yet be met.  
**Policy WHB 12** – Sustainable Construction Practices  
 No issues identified
- 6.10. **Objective 10** - *New development will not have a detrimental impact on the quality of life of existing residents*  
**Objectives and policies not supported by proposals**  
**Policy WHB 13** – Flooding and Sustainable Drainage  
 Cllrs were concerned that, as the development proposal currently stands, and taking into account the issues raised by residents at public forum, particularly in respect of the risk of flooding at Attleton Green, it was *...unlikely to reduce the likelihood of increasing the flood risk of Wickhambrook in the future.*  
**Policy WHB 14** – Dark Skies  
 No Issues Identified
- 6.11. **Objective 11** - *The level of services and facilities will be protected and improved.*  
**Proposals Support NP objectives and policies –**  
**Policy WHB 15** – Community Facilities  
 No detriment – won't be losing anything.
- 6.12. **Objective 12** - *The range of existing community facilities and services will be improved.*  
**Objectives and policies not supported by proposals**  
**Policy WBH 16** – Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities  
 There are limited resources within village and finance to maintain them and access by residents. would be looking for additional funding to improve and maintain existing areas.

6.13. **Objective 13** - *The capacity and safety of the road network to cope with new development will be ensured.*

**Objectives and policies not supported by proposals**

Capacity is not an issue but safety is on B1063. The DoT *Local Transport Note L1/07* should be used to determine appropriate traffic calming measures (such as mini roundabouts, pelican crossings etc.) 85% highways 10.4 B1063 creates a significant barrier - footpath width and safety

6.14. **Objective 14** - *The improvement of bus services to nearby towns will be encouraged.*

**Objectives and policies not supported by proposals**

No provision to improve enhance bus service

6.15. **Objective 15** - *The Public Rights of Way network will be protected, maintained and improved*

**Objectives and policies not supported by proposals**

Across the village centre, footways are sporadic in their quality and completeness although the recent development at The Meadows has provided a much-needed footway along Cemetery Road. The B1063 creates a significant barrier between the main built-up area of the village and the village stores and post office. The footpath width from Bunters road east down Shop Hill is a significant safety issue.

The meeting determined that it cannot currently support the application until matters identified under Objectives 2, 3, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14 and 15 and policies WHB 2, 11K, 13 and 16 have been addressed.

**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.25.12.06 **Noted:**  
The meeting considered a response to the consultation on Local Government Reorganisation (previously circulated as [WPC.EO.25.12.02](#)) and noting that this was a complex issue with many differing opinions, agreed that each councillor, and the clerk, would respond to the consultation as individuals rather than submit a single response on behalf of the parish council.
- EO.25.12.07 **Noted:**  
The meeting considered an offer of two oak tree saplings (f.o.c) from a local resident and agreed to accept them with thanks, a suitable location to be determined at a later date.
- EO.25.12.08 **Noted:** That when any other matters for information, to be noted or for inclusion on a future agenda, the following:
- Budget and Precept
  - IT Policy and Procurement policy
  - Staffing committee
  - Planning Committee
  - Community actions in neighbourhood plan
- EO.25.12.09 **Noted:** Confirmation that the scheduled date for the next meeting is Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2026 beginning at 7:00pm at Pavilion, Wickhambrook Memorial Social Centre.  
Cllr Andrea Grimes presented her apologies arising from business commitments.
- EO.25.12.10 **Noted:** Close of meeting 20:17

**Signed:** Tracey Turner

**Dated:** 15/01/2026