

Wickhambrook Parish Council – Estates Committee

Minutes

Of a meeting of the Estates Committee held on 3rd September 2026

Present: Cllrs K Grimes, M Karunaratne, M Lavelle, Mr Roger Medley

Attending: Clerk Hilary Workman, Cllr Andrea Grimes

26.09.01 **Noted:** Apologies for absence approved

- Mrs Mary Jolland – Personal commitment
- Mrs Deb Moir - Personal commitment

26.09.02 **Noted:** That there were no Members' Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Other Registerable Interests in subsequent Agenda items nor any additions and/or deletions to the Council's Register of Interests.

26.09.03 **Resolved:**

That the Minutes of the Estates Committee meeting held on 2nd July 2026, as tabled, be agreed as a true record

26.09.04 Noted: Public Forum – (**Open Session**)¹. 19:01

That when comments or questions on any Agenda item or matter of concern were invited, there being no members of the public present, the forum was closed.

26.09.05 **Noted:** To note the following correspondence received to this meeting not dealt with as an Agenda item or in the Clerk's report:

- Cllr A Grimes – fly tipping report – tins of paint on the verge of Cloak Lane had been cleared as a result of the report made to West Suffolk Council.

26.09.06 **Noted:**

Decisions of the Parish Council at its July meetings (previously circulated as [WPC.EC.26.09.01](#))

26.09.07 **Noted:** Reports to this meeting from Portfolio Holders or other agencies summarised below:

7.1 Parish Assets (defibrillator)

Cllr A Grimes

An oral update that:

- Checking of units was up to date
- The Defibrillator located at the MSC had shown signs of condensation accumulating at the previous check but Cllr K Grimes having turned the thermostat up to 10C, there were no further issues identified.
- Pads in defibrillators are in date until November '27.

7.2 Environment & Sustainability

Mrs M Jolland

The clerk advised that the next litter pick are scheduled for 5th and 7th November (in advance of Remembrance Sunday)

7.3 Footpaths officer report

Mr R. Medley

An oral updated that:

- Suffolk County Council cuts the underfoot growth of selected priority footpaths twice a year, but sadly, this had always ended up with him having negotiated the cuts, and there had always been problems at the Attleton Green end of the parish. This year he had kept a record:

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.

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- Cutting started in the area on 5th May and was due to be completed within 6 weeks.
- No sign of any action on 9th June. Contacted *'Will be starting next week'*.
- 21st June, still no sign of any action.
- 24th June *'Will be completed immediately'*.
- 6th July, some paths cut.
- 9th July *'Contractor devising a plan to complete first cut'*.
- 20th July *'Will complete the outstanding work'*.
- 23rd July Officer carried out spot check and promised to chase anything missed.
- Last week Footpath 3 had still not been cut.
- The contractor was now starting the second cut and he had been promised that FP 3 will be one of the first to be done.
- An updated list of priority footpaths had been requested, but on receipt did not include FP40 - He has requested that this footpath be re-instated. The contractor had been cutting sections of 25 and 26 (edge of the playing fields) but the full extent of these footpaths is included in the parish grounds contract, which makes provision for up to six cuts and so could reasonably be excluded from the list of priority footpaths for SCC to cut.
- FP1, at Farley Green End, now had a Diversion Order in place (the path now running around the edge of the little airfield instead of run diagonally across).
- He had enquired about a possible extension to FP10 (the Stansfield fishing lakes are within reach) but had been advised by PRoW that *'there is insufficient historical evidence to make a modification'*, so the footpath was likely to remain a dead end.
- There had been no update on the missing section of FP19
- He had recently spent many hours cutting back side growth. The meeting asked the clerk to add an item to the website requesting that landowners cut their hedges now that the bird nesting season had closed.
- FP22 at Coltsfoot Green – Herris Fencing had been installed either side of the footpath which crosses an open paddock, and dogs had been reported roaming free on the other side of the fencing. Some users of the footpath may find this intimidating and the meeting asked the clerk to report this issue to PRoW.

7.4 **Tree Warden's report**

Mrs Deb Moir

The clerk reported that Mrs Moir had advised of issues with respect to two birch trees and an Ash at Attleton Green, which she had followed up with the tree surgeon. Deadwood from the Ash had been removed, and the birch trees, although stressed, had been left to see whether they improve over the autumn.

7.5 **Youth Facilities**

Cllr Karunaratne

7.5.1 Main Playground

An oral update thanking the volunteers for clearing the brush from the side of the playground, MUGA and Skatepark.

7.5.2 Teen Project and Games Area

7.5.3 Zip Wire

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7.5.4 Bury Road Playground

Cllr K Grimes

An oral update that:

- He had completed tightening of the bolts prior to the July inspection
- The bolt through the metal feet on the swing set would require installation of a new bolt to enable tightening – the meeting asked the clerk to check whether the new feet to the swing set were still under warranty with Sovereign Play.
- The Cherry within the play area had some dead wood which would require removal, and the crown lifting.

7.6 Six Acres

Cllr M Lavelle

An oral update that:

- Joints to garden benches had been tightened
- Further lifting of the crowns to trees on the inner banks of Six Acres may be appropriate to reduce the scope for den building and any injuries arising from this by younger residents of the parish

The meeting asked the clerk to review this later in the autumn.

7.7 Cemetery and Churchyard Safety Reports

Cllr A Grimes

An oral update that:

- The damaged gate at churchyard had been reported to the Church Warden
- The clerk had arranged for the Church Warden to seek advice on the Blue Pine situated close to the Church from Acacia Tree Surgery.
- Two new trees have been identified adjacent to the Almshouses. The meeting asked the Clerk to check the response of the parish council to the TPO and establish whether they were expected replacements.
- A list of memorials in the Cemetery loose on their bases had been provided to the clerk – further stakes for banding had been requested.
- The metal gates at the entrance leading to the Chapel of Rest were stuck in an open position. It was confirmed that there was some rot in the posts, resulting in the hinges having pulled clear at some points. The meeting asked the clerk to price up work to replace the posts (8" x 8").
- A general plan of the Cemetery indicating areas and row orders in both the new and old sections was requested.
- The headstone for Kenneth G Powter appeared to have been undermined, possibly by wildlife. The meeting asked the clerk to contact the stone mason an additional inscription had been recently added and the headstone may still be under warranty.
- Boundary hedge to the Cemetery adjacent to Cemetery Road was protruding out onto the road and reducing visibility. The meeting asked the clerk to request that the grounds contractor cut back away more from the road when trimming this autumn.

7.8 Village Greens Report

Mrs Deb Moir

An oral update from the clerk that no issues had been raised.

26.09.08 **Noted:** Clerk's report

- 8.1 The meeting considered an update on current Estates Issues (previously circulated as [WPC.EC.26.09.02](#)) and identified no further actions.
- 8.2 Work to parish trees arising from the interim inspection and a report from the Tree Warden had now been completed.
- 8.3 A purchase order for the installation of the two new parish noticeboards and replacement bin had been issued to R H Landscapes and work was scheduled for completion by late September.

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- 8.4 The September volunteer morning had focussed on raising crowns of trees over FP25 and 26 and brush clearance behind the Childrens' play area, MUGA and Skatepark.
- 8.5 A Cut and Collect of the Wildlife Areas had been completed.
- 8.6 Following a suggestion raised at July's Full Council Meeting, the Clerk had contacted the Highways Community Liaison Officer for advice on appropriate planting of Nunnery Green which would also contribute as a Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) (no response had been received in advance of the meeting).
- 8.7 The clerk had written to the former football clubs requesting an indication of their preferred option with respect to the shipping container located at Six Acres (no response had been received in advance of the meeting).

26.09.09 **Noted:**

The meeting considered an update on the designated Wildlife Area between the Tennis Courts and Bowling Green at Six Acres (previously circulated as [WPC.EC.26.09.03](#)) and agreed the proposed location for any future water harvesting (within the fenced off area of the Bowling Green). The meeting however decided that that no further action be taken at present, to allow time for the WI to determine whether and where they may plant any future fruit trees (which had formed part of their original scheme).

The meeting also noted that no other local Bowls Clubs had indicated a desire to operate from the Bowling Green.

26.09.10 **Noted:**

The meeting considered an update on play area inspections (previously circulated as [WPC.EC.26.09.04](#)) and asked the clerk to write formally to West Suffolk Parks should the monthly reporting on play area inspection fail to record work completed by the parish council.

26.09.11 **Noted:**

The meeting considered an update on parish lands (previously circulated as [WPC.EC.26.09.05](#)) agreed to appoint R H Landscapes, who had quoted £750 plus VAT. The meeting asked the clerk to specify the work required in the purchase order as set out below:

- Cut back over shrubs/ fallen trees etc that are over hanging ditch to a height of 2m
- Rake out & clear debris from ditch
- All created waste to be removed from site to the contractor's depot for their onward disposal

Resolved:

Authorise the cost of work to clear the ditch to the back of the Bowling Green at a cost of not more than £2100 plus VAT.

26.09.12 **Noted:**

The meeting considered a request from a local business to use Six Acres as a departure and test point for Hot Air Ballooning (previously circulated as [WPC.EC.26.09.06](#)) and, noting the response from parish council's insurers, below:

I have discussed this with our insurers, who have advised that they are comfortable with the proposed ballooning activities provided that:

- *The ballooning company has carried out a written risk assessment and inspection of the location and is satisfied that the site is safe and suitable.*
- *The Council has also carried out its own written risk assessment and inspection of the location and is satisfied that the site is safe and suitable.*
- *The Council obtains a copy of the ballooning company's public liability insurance and confirms the limit of indemnity held.*

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Please note that your policy would not provide any cover for the ballooning company's activities. Any liability arising from their operations would need to fall under their own insurance arrangements.

The Council's policy would only respond where an incident arises as a result of the land itself causing the injury or damage

agreed that a trial arrangement (under a Six Acres agreement) until the end of the Financial Year be entered into (limited to not more t, noting that the operator be responsible for:

- Noise mitigation
- Limitation/restriction of access onto Six Acres during flight departures
- Making good any damage caused by departures to Six Acres
- Fire prevention
- Any necessary notifications and permissions
- Risk assessments and insurance
- Advance (seven days) notice of planned activities

and asked the clerk to prepare a draft agreement (to be checked by Suffolk Association of Local Councils – SALC).

26.09.13 **Noted:**

The meeting considered a briefing note in respect of a proposal by a local landowner for improvements to access on FP30 (previously circulated as [WPC.EC.26.09.07](#)) and, having noted that the proposal would be likely to contribute to the following Community Actions set out in the council's mad Neighbourhood Plan:

- **Community Action 2 – Wildlife and Conservation**
- **Community Action 3 – Historic Assets**
- **Community Action 7 – Footpaths and Bridleways**

agreed that it would be reasonable to contribute some funding towards the proposed improvements to the bridge. The meeting, having noted that the landowner would be seeking advice and grant funding from a range of organisations, agreed that the landowner should be encouraged to come back to the parish council with a firmer proposal as and when he is ready to do so.

26.09.14 **Noted:** That when any other Council business for information, to be noted or for inclusion on a future agenda was invited, the following:

- Planting of new trees to support wildlife adjacent to the path leading to Chapel of Rest
- Review of Estates budgets and draft 3 year plan
- Review of cemetery regulations, fees & charges
- Coffee caravan – link up with WI

26.09.15 **Noted:** That the scheduled date for the next meeting is 5th November 2026 in the Pavilion, Wickhambrook Memorial Social Centre. Apologies were given in advance by Cllr A Grimes.

26.09.16 **Noted:** Close of meeting - 20:19.