

Annual Report from Chair

of Wickhambrook Parish Council

The Annual Parish Meeting gives an opportunity to look back over the previous twelve months activities.

Meetings:

The Parish Council has held:

- 7 Ordinary meetings
- 3 Extra-ordinary meetings
- 5 meetings of the Estates Committee

Finance:

Made 253 payments for services to the parish, including:

- Transferring £2334.03 to Wickhambrook Memorial Social Centre (recycling grant)
- Grants to local organisations:
 - Carnival Committee (Fete & Flower Show) £ 240.24
 - Wickhambrook Memorial Social Centre £1095.83
 - Local History Society £ 492.60
 - Repairs to Memorial Clock £ 500.00
- In Kind Grants (as part of parish council grounds keeping)¹:
 - Wickhambrook Outdoor Bowls Club £ 1008.16
 - Wickhambrook Tennis Club £ 206.00
 - Wickhambrook Memorial Social Centre £2143.50
- Donated £300.00 to the following Charities
 - Royal British Legion £ 50.00
 - East Anglian Air Ambulance £100.00
 - East Anglia's Childrens Hospices (EACH) £ 75.00
 - St Edmundsbury Newstalk £ 75.00

Total £2328.67

And received the following grants, funds and assets:

- West Suffolk Council – Locality Funding – Community Engagement £ 1000.00
- Wickhambrook Outdoor Bowls Club – Donation of funds on closure £ 425.85
- Bowls club equipment (various)

The cost of maintaining grounds and assets in the parish last year included:

- Grounds Contract £13,335.60
- Six Acres £ 280.00
- Tree Surgery £ 690.00
- Cemetery & Churchyard £ 1464.18
- Play Areas, MUGA & Skate Park £ 4,729.23
- Greens £ -
- Bin & Dog waste £ 801.61

Total: £21,300.62

¹ Net cost of indirect funding through grounds maintenance was reduced by £382.30 on the previous financial year due to small changes to the grounds contract and careful monitoring of water usage

Projects:

Our major project over the past year has been preparing the [Neighbourhood Plan](#), which received a YES vote at referendum, and was made (adopted) by West Suffolk Councils on 16th December 2025.

This has been a massive and detailed project, and thanks go out to Cllr Tracey Turner for leading the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group, Secretaries Richard Byers & Roger Merry, and the group members, Diana Carroll, Emily Bayman, Jamie Green, Penny Bayman, Sandra Law, Sue Sternberg and Tara Hayden.

The plan is now referenced clearly when the parish council considers applications for full planning permission or variations.

Highways:

Unfortunately, despite the support of our County Councillor and Local MP, Nick Timothy, we have so far still been unable to convince Suffolk County Council Highways that there is a case for reducing the speed limit at Wickham Street from 40mph to 30mph.

Two new tube surveys of speed at Wickham Street were commissioned and undertaken in the spring of last year, and these, together with a survey of residents views, fed into a detailed report which was agreed by the parish council and submitted to Suffolk County Council in December '25, requesting a full report by Suffolk County Council on which both it and Suffolk Constabulary will be consulted before a decision is reached on whether a reduction in the speed limit will be agreed.

Last spring, we successfully recruited a team for Community Speed Watch, who are now carrying out regular Speed Watch surveys.

Planning:

29 (an increase of 45% on the previous year) planning applications were notified to and considered by the parish council over in the past year.

Other projects

and activities in the past year have included:

- Ongoing transcription of historic cemetery records and plotting of Memorials (thanks to Andrea Grimes) – all our burial and deed records have now been uploaded to our new cemetery software
- Kevin running the VAS
- A stand at Wickhambrook Fete and Flower Show
- Seven volunteer mornings tidying the cemetery and play areas
- Six litter picks (with thanks to Mary Jolland and Barbara Merritt of WMSC and Councillors Andrea and Kevin Grimes)
- A move to a new .gov.uk website

We also collaborated with a wide range of groups and individuals to bring about further improvements to the parish, including:

- With Suffolk Public Rights of Way team, to investigate ways to improve the surfacing of BOAT 31 and reduce the impact of surface water flowing onto the track at Coltsfoot Green (now complete)
- A team of volunteers in the parish (coordinated by Amanda Lavelle) who put on Warm Winter Wednesdays in January and February, hosted at the WI Hall;

- With the WI, who have planted hundreds of saplings at a new wildlife area between the Tennis Courts, Bowling Green and the School; and
- Mary Jolland leading the Cemetery Tidying days and volunteers, Kathy Cordy, Andrea and Kevin Grimes, Mel Karunaratne, Mike Lavelle, Roger Medley and Tim O'Donnelly.

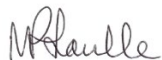
Thanks go out to our lay members on the Estates Committee, Mary Jolland, Roger Medley and Deb Moir, our Councillors, Paul Couzens, Andrea and Kevin Grimes, Mel Karunaratne, and Tracey Turner, our County Councillor Bobby Bennett and District Councillor Sarah Pugh.

Sadly, this past year we've said goodbye to Cllrs Paul Couzens and Linda Smith, who have retired, and we lost our dear friend and Lay Member of the Estates Committee David Di Giulio, who died in the autumn.

We currently have three vacancies on the parish council if you would be interested in joining us!

Thanks also to Peter Vince, who has looked after the Defibrillator at the Fire Station for many years, and is now providing advice to our in house team, our former Web master, Maria Sumner of Mdsign, and the Trustees at Wickhambrook Memorial Social Centre, without whom our lives would be much harder!

Please forgive me if there's anyone I've missed!



Mike Lavelle – Chair of Wickhambrook Parish Council.