

**Minutes of Wickhambrook Annual Parish Meeting
Thursday 30th April in the Dulcie Smith Room at the MSC**

The meeting was opened at 7:30 p.m. by the Chairman of the Parish Council Mike Lavelle

Present: Cllrs Andrea and Kevin Grimes, Mel Karunaratne, Mike Lavelle & Tracey Turner
Clerk Hilary Workman, Deirdre Smith, 4 members of the public

1. Apologies for absence: Cllr Sarah Pugh

2. Chairman's Welcome – Cllr Lavelle

3. Minutes of 2025 Annual Parish Meeting

With the approval of the meeting these were taken as read and signed. approved

4. Presentation of the Alf Hicks Crystal Biscuit Barrel

At its January meeting the parish council agreed to award the Biscuit Barrel to **Dierdre Smith**, for her huge contribution to Wickhambrook in a quiet way, and her sustained fundraising for MacMillan over many years.



It was with huge pleasure that Mike Lavelle presented Deirdre with the [Alf Hicks Biscuit Barrel Award](#).

Deirdre was born in Wickhambrook and has been involved with village life for all of her life. She has helped in the past with Jubilee celebrations and to raise funds to build the Pavilion, she has been helping with the Wickhambrook Carnival and Fete and Flower Show for the last thirteen years, and has been actively involved in the running of many of the village societies (such as the WI and Garden Club).

Somehow Deirdre found the time to work with Val Orange (2016 recipient of the Alf Hicks Award) in raising funds for MacMillan Cancer Support with an annual coffee morning, which started over 25 years ago, and ten years ago Deirdre took over the whole initiative.

These coffee mornings, with the usual excellent provision of cakes and pastries that Deirdre and her supporters create, have raised £27,800 over the years.

To put this in context, there are almost 3.5 million people living with cancer in the UK today, and more than 360,000 are diagnosed every year - someone you know may have called upon MacMillan for help.

Deirdre is also following in family footsteps, her mum also having been awarded the Alf Hicks Biscuit Barrel - a real family link to the support of the lifestyle we all enjoy here in Wickhambrook.

5. Parish Council Annual Report(s)

Cllr Lavelle summarised the activities and successes of the year ([previously circulated](#)) and thanked all those who have donated their time, resources and enthusiasm to help improve the parish.

A summary of the 2025-26 financial year ([previously circulated](#)) was presented by the clerk.

6. District Councillor's Report (published)

These Minutes are in draft form only. They have not been ratified by Council and are not a matter of formal record. They will be put before the next Annual Parish Meeting (2027) for approval. Queries should be directed to:
the Parish Clerk, Hilary Workman E-mail: clerk@wickhambrook-pc.gov.uk - Telephone: 07508 039810

7. Reports from village clubs, organisations and societies

- **Wickhambrook Garden Club**
An oral report summarising the successes and activities of the Garden Club over the past year ([previously published](#))
- **Women's Institute (WI)** (previously circulated)
An oral report by Mrs Amanda Lavelle summarising the achievements and activities of the WI over the past year ([previously published](#))
- **1st Wickhambrook scout group** ([previously circulated](#))
- **Wickhambrook Tennis Club** ([previously circulated](#))

8. Questions from Residents

When invited – the following:

- Could the clerk explain why the precept for the parish had increased by just over 18% when the precept for the District and County authorities had been kept to around 5%
The clerk explained that the budget had been prepared taking into account:
 - Anticipated increases in costs of services and supplies
 - An awareness of the need to budget for:
 - Increased costs under Highways Road Safety if the requested reduction in speed limit at Wickham Street from 40mph to 30mph were to be approved) - £4000 set aside for the likely cost of Road Traffic Order)
 - future replacement of play equipment, which was over 10 years old (majority installed in 2016) - £2000 to Earmarked Reserves
 - possible devolved responsibilities under Local Government Reorganisation (£5,000 to Earmarked Reserves)
 - Building on Reserves to cover the cost of local elections in 2027 (£500 Earmarked Reserves
- Could the clerk explain why there had been no publicity or public comment by the parish council on the proposed Forest City on the Cambridge/Suffolk border?
The clerk explained that West Suffolk Council had advised that the proposals were not included in their Local Plan, and that advice from the Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC) had been that it would not be appropriate for the parish council to comment in advance of any formal application, as this may leave the parish council open to a perception that any subsequent response may have been pre-determined.
- Could the clerk not make available advice on how to find out more about the proposals?
The clerk advised that she would publish an item with links to Forest City and how to contact Nick Timothy, MP for West Suffolk.

9. Date of the next meeting – Thursday 29th April at 7:30pm

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and declared the meeting closed at 20:32.

Actions on issues raised at previous (2025) Annual Parish Meeting

- Could access to surgery be gritted in the winter, it is dangerous – the meeting asked the clerk to report back to Suffolk County Council - reported
- Cllrs were asked where the parish council was asking Suffolk County Council Highways to reduce the speed limit to 30mph. Cllr Lavelle confirmed that this was the current 40mph stretch on the A143 through Wickham Street up to Clopton and noted that, if successful, the Community Speedwatch team would then be able to monitor and collect data on this stretch. – Awaiting outcome of formal report requested from Suffolk County Council.
- A local resident reported that they understood that it was easier to establish reduced speed zones (for example, 20mph in the vicinity of schools) and the meeting asked the clerk to research this. Parish council is looking at a joint project with neighbouring parishes to bring this about, sharing costs.
- Parking in the vicinity of the Doctors Surgery and Boyden Close was still causing congestion and the meeting asked the clerk to approach Havebury as one of the major land owners to investigate options for additional parking. – no positive response from Havebury
- The village sign was reported as looking a bit tired and residents asked whether it could be cleaned and touched up, noting that we have an artist in the village – this is scheduled for our May volunteer morning