

**Minutes of Wickhambrook Annual Parish Meeting
Thursday 25th 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 & Linda Smith
Clerk Hilary Workman
SC Cllr Bobby Bennett
19 members of the public.

1. Apologies for absence:

Were received from Cllr Paul Couzens and Cllr Tracey Turner

2. Chairman's Welcome – Cllr Lavelle

3. Minutes of 2024 Annual Parish Meeting

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

4. Presentation of the Alf Hicks Crystal Biscuit Barrel

At its January meeting the parish council agreed to award the Biscuit Barrel to the Warm Winter Wednesday team of volunteers for all their work over past two years. They reach so many people, have forged strong connections with Wickhambrook Primary Academy and have been able to support other local charities their fundraising.



Left to right: Mandy Wallace, Dylan Blake, Sally Welsh, Edward Parfitt, Amanda Lavelle, Ethan Webb, Rosie Kerr

Members of Year Six, Wickhambrook Primary Academy were present to receive the award with their teacher Miss Evans, head Teacher Rosie Kerr, Amanda Lavelle and Sally Welsh.

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 2024-25 financial year (previously circulated) was presented by the clerk.

6. County Councillor's Report (previously circulated)

Cllr Bennett remembered Robert Everitt (County Councillor, and a former District Councillor and Wickhambrook Parish Councillor) as a much esteemed colleague who had sadly died the previous weekend.

Cllr Bennett is the Children and Young People's Services Portfolio holder. She summarised the ambitions of Suffolk County Council, its priorities and how they underpin spending decisions.

Signed: M P Lavelle

Dated: 30/04/2026

She noted that the County Council is working hard to improve Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) provision and prioritise spending to support families and older population in their homes (none of which it could do without the fantastic voluntary sector).

Her work covers twenty four parishes, and much of it recently has involved trying to sort out highways issues for the parishes. She encouraged everyone to report any issues on the SCC Report a Problem webpage - <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/highway-maintenance/report-a-highways-issue>

The biggest issue as ever was funding. The County Council has lost funding from central government and are advocating for additional funding. The proposed Local Government reforms, moving to a unitary authority should avoid duplication and hopefully result in a more joined up service.

In Wickhambrook Cllr Bennett was still trying to address speeding and flooding issues raised by the parish. She noted progress towards the Neighbourhood Plan which West Suffolk were consulting on, which she fully supported.

7. District Councillor's Report (published)

Cllr Sarah Pugh's report was kindly summarised by Cllr Andrea Grimes.

8. Reports from village clubs, organisations and societies

• **Wickhambrook Garden Club** (previously circulated)

An oral report from Audrey Lawfiled summarising the society's activities over the past year. The group had been re-named from Horticultural Society to the Garden Club as it was felt that this was more inclusive and welcoming. The members of the committee remained the same, but there had been some change to roles. There had been many suggestions from members, some of which have already been acted upon. The Society enjoyed an active and productive year with meetings and visits, and held both a very successful annual plant sale in May, and the Annual Summer Show in July.

• **Wickhambrook Memorial Social Centre** (previously circulated)

Steve Thwaite, chair of the Trustees, thanked the talented and committed team of trustees without whom the social centre could not function. The Hall is in a good financial position, and the team is working to modernise. Challenges for the future include finding a cost effective and climate friendly way to heat the building, and succession planning for the future. This past year they had welcomed a new member, Sylvia Radley, to the team. The parish council was thanked for its contribution to the installation of a new height restriction barrier improving both security and access onto the Recreation Ground.

• **History Society** (published)

An oral report from Gillian Cooper noting that the society had had an excellent year with many interesting meetings and visits, and an enjoyable Christmas supper at the WI hall in December, with thanks to all the committee members.

The parish council was thanked for its support of a grant to purchase a new display cabinet situated in the Wickhambrook Memorial Social Centre to improve accessibility to local history documents and objects for parish residents.

• **Women's Institute (WI)** (previously circulated)

An oral report from Dorothy Anderson summarising the society's activities over the past year. Wickhambrook WI has welcomed many new members over the year. The group enjoyed a wide range of meetings, activities and visits, some of them challenging, and also participated in The Big Help Out, daffodil planting across the greens in the parish with thanks to a grant from the parish council.

The group had continued to campaign on issues important to it locally and nationally, meeting with the Rivers Trust and pressing Nick Timothy MP on access to affordable dental care for all.

- **1st Wickhambrook scout group**

An oral report from the Wickhambrook Group Scout Leader. The past year had been challenging, with the group growing really well. There are now 15 beavers and cubs and scouts would be attending the St Georges Day parade in Newmarket.

The group hopes to expand Cubs, and needs to recruit additional new leaders. New sources of funding were being sought and thanks extended to everyone involved with and supporting the group.

The group was trying to get more involved in the community.

9. **Questions from Residents**

When invited – the following:

- Could access to surgery be gritted in the winter, it is dangerous – the meeting asked the clerk to report back to Suffolk County Council.
- The foul water drain at Nunnery Green which had been repaired was leaking again. Residents noted that land drains from fields into ditches adjacent to roads resulted in the drains being insufficient to cope with run-off. Residents were encouraged to report any flooding and/or highways issues to Suffolk County Council through its online reporting tool. The clerk advised that advice on services and how to report issues was published on the Wickhambrook.org website.
- 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.
- 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.
- It was further noted that all hamlets within the parish were restricted to 30mph with the exception of Wickham Street and Attleton Green.
- 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.
- 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.

10. **Date of the next meeting – Thursday 30th April at 7:30pm**

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