



Hello, I hope you are all keeping safe and well.

Spring bulbs are starting to appear, and if you're walking past the cemetery, you'll see that the Cherry Trees planted last spring have their first blossom appearing. It's still cold though, so don't forget the Warm Winter Wednesdays being put on at the Women's Institute Hall on:

- 24<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> January;
- 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> February

Pop in for free tea, biscuits and soup etc and spend time in company at card games, board games jigsaws etc. I try to pop in too, so if you see me and have any queries or issues you want to raise, please do have a chat!



Five of the wonderful team of ladies in the parish who put on Warm Winter Wednesdays (from left to right):  
Vinita Bonini, Mitch Karunaratne, Lorraine Juniper, Ali Byrne and Amanda Lavelle

I always find January one of the hardest months of the year, and with the [cost of living crisis](#) affecting many people, please don't be afraid to seek out help and support – there is a lot out there, and I'll keep posting to the [parish website news](#) whenever any new information comes in.



We've also had some sad news this month. We've recently learned of the sad death following a short illness of Mary Evans, our former District and County Councillor.

Mary was a faithful public servant for many years and will be sadly missed by a huge number of people in all our communities. She did so much for Wickhambrook, working tirelessly for our community and supporting the parish council in a wide range of projects for the benefit of Wickhambrook Residents.

Matthew Hicks, leader of Suffolk County Council, said:

"Mary was a hugely dedicated and kind councillor and a dear friend. She was determined to make a difference for the residents of Suffolk, whether in Clare Division or as a Cabinet Member and Deputy Leader of Suffolk County Council. In the most difficult times during the pandemic, when we faced so much uncertainty, Mary was always a huge support to me and all our colleagues. Her contribution to our county can never be understated; she will be greatly missed by us all."

His words are so true.

Our thanks go out to Mary, and our thoughts and prayers to her family and loved ones.

At its January meeting, the parish council:

- Agreed the budget for the next financial year (beginning in April '24), and the precept **£46,341 based on its agreed 3 year work plan**
- Reviewed and updated its Scheme of Delegation, Terms of Reference for the Estates Committee and Road Safety Working Group, and its Risk Management Policy and supporting General Risk Assessment
- Appointed Suffolk Association of Local Council's as Internal Auditor for the current financial year and confirmed that the clerk continue to act as its Responsible Financial Officer
- Considered nominations for the Alf Hicks Biscuit Barrel Award (previously circulated as report **WPC.24.01.09**) to be presented at the Annual Parish Meeting in 2024. Noting the volume of nominations and the joy that has been brought to residents of the parish over the Christmas Season from his lighting and decorations, agreed to award the Alf Hicks Biscuit Barrel Award to George Woods of Nunnery Green.
- Extended its thanks to Sandy Thwaite, who has sadly stepped down as a councillor.



Thank you for the time that you have taken to engage with the parish council in preparing this Neighbourhood Plan, and particularly for your understanding of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group in their work to prepare this plan for the community.

The public forum session in parish council's January meeting focussed on concerns and questions raised by residents about the draft list of Non-Designated Heritage Assets (NDHA's) included in Wickhambrook's Draft Neighbourhood plan, which was open to consultation in December last year.

Having considered the many comments made and concerns raised during the consultation period and subsequently at the parish council meeting on 11th January about properties listed in WHB 11, and following discussion at the latest working group meeting, the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group will be proposing a different strategy to the Parish Council.

This is because it recognises that it is sometimes difficult to determine what would constitute a non-designated heritage asset in the context of Wickhambrook, due to the individual character and nature of different parts of the village, and in particular the collective appearance and distinctiveness of individual greens, when all the properties around a green constitute that characteristic.

The Neighbourhood Plan Working Group has therefore indicated that it wishes the parish council to consider removing the draft list of proposed properties in WHB 11. However, it respects the wishes of residents in previous surveys as expressed in the consultation on the draft plan and has asked that appropriate statements be added to the neighbourhood plan, (yet to be determined), that will reinforce what the plan already says about proposals for new development respecting the character and distinctiveness of the immediate area including the significance of the historic environment and heritage assets. This is what the parish council will be considering at its extra-ordinary meeting on 1st February (7:30pm at the Pavilion, Wickhambrook Memorial Social Centre).

There has been a substantial response to the consultation on the draft plan, and all the responses (not just those with respect to policy WHB 11) will have to be considered by our planning consultant, referring to any changes in legislation, planning policy and national frameworks, before a final draft plan can be brought back to the parish council for approval. This is not likely to be before the scheduled meeting in April.



Our next Estates Committee meeting is also on 1st February (6:00pm in the Pavilion, Memorial Social Centre). At this meeting the committee will be considering the following matters:

- an Update on Estates Issues and purchase of:
  - a sustainable bench for Six Acres
  - replacement signage
  - tools and equipment
- the approved budget for the next financial year and a proposed schedule of works
- a proposal for authorising the costs of play equipment supplies and remedial work arising from play inspections
- remedial works to staked and banded memorials in Wickhambrook Cemetery
- a proposal to change cemetery software suppliers
- refurbishment of cemetery in advance of D-Day 80

Parish Council Meetings are open to the public so why not come along? If you would like to get more involved there are lots of ways to contribute, by:

- attending meetings and asking questions
- joining in with volunteer events (tidying the cemetery, cleaning play equipment)
- joining the Road Safety Working Group
- becoming a lay member on our Estates Committee, or becoming a Councillor!

We currently have three vacancies for parish councillors, and are also looking to recruit a lay member to the Estates Committee.

If you would like to find out more, please do call me or one of our councillors, or come along to one of our meetings. If you would like to be considered as a councillor, please take a look at the [website](#), and complete and return a co-option application and eligibility form to Hilary. We look forward to hearing from you!

You can find draft minutes January meeting here: [Parish Council meeting](#) – 11<sup>th</sup> January

If there is anything you would like the parish council to consider at a future meeting, [please do get in touch with me](#).

Some good news items:

- The Cherry Trees in Wickhambrook Cemetery, planted as part of the Queen's Green Canopy to mark the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee have just come into blossom;
- The bus shelter in Cemetery Road has been installed - Suffolk County Council will be going back to install some seating in the near future; and
- We'll be planting some replacement hedging between the cemetery and the pavement on Cemetery Road on 7th February (10:30 - 12 noon) - If you would like to join in, please do drop me a line!



Do feel free to forward this message on to neighbours, friends and family in the parish and ask them to get in touch with me at [parishclerk@wickhambrook.org.uk](mailto:parishclerk@wickhambrook.org.uk) if they would like to be included in our e-newsletter mailing list!

Hilary Workman

Clerk for Wickhambrook Parish Council