

# Wickhambrook Parish Council – Estates Committee

## Minutes

Of a meeting of the Estates Committee held on

**Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024**

**Present:** Cllrs P Couzens, M Lavelle, Mr R Medley

**Attending:** Clerk Hilary Workman  
David Di Giulio, Andrea and Kevin Grimes

24.02.01 **Noted:** Apologies for absence to be noted or approved:  
**Approved:** Mrs M Jolland – personal commitment

24.02.02 **Noted:**  
That when invited, there were no Members' Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Other Registerable Interests in subsequent Agenda items and no additions or deletions to the Council's Register of Interests.

**24.02.03 Resolved:**  
**That the Minutes of the Estates Committee meeting held on 2nd November 2023, as tabled, be agreed as a true record**

24.02.04 **Noted:** Public Forum – (**Open Session**)<sup>1</sup> Opened: 18:01pm  
There being no comments or questions on any Agenda item or matter of concern from those members of the public present, the public forum was closed.

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

- 5.1 Local Resident – Thanks for organising the new surface to Footpath 25
- 5.2 Local Resident - Overgrown footpath at Wickham Street from Plumbers Arms to All Saints Church
- 5.3 Various De-fib Suppliers – DHSC Community Defibrillator Scheme and desirability of no-one being more than three minutes from a defibrillator.
- 5.4 West Suffolk Council – Capital Sports Fund (£200 - £1000 to support capital costs of grass roots community sports clubs to increase participation and enhance offer to wider community)

24.02.06 **Noted:** Decisions of the Parish Council at its November and January meetings:  
**November:**

23.11.7.4	The meeting considered an update on Road Safety issues (previously circulated as WPC.23.11.03) and agreed (if sufficient volunteers could be recruited) to establish: A volunteer team focussed on flooding issues reporting to a Cllr to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Identify areas prone to flooding by collating existing reports on SCC reporting tool and liaising with an officer with responsibility for flood avoidance at Suffolk County Council/Environment Agency</li><li>2. Walking the length of water courses where flooding has occurred in the vicinity and (with an officer from SCC/EA) identifying any flow restrictions, so that SCC/EA can contact the landowner to instruct them to remove restrictions.</li><li>3. Identify any grips at roadside that require clearing as part of a rolling programme and log on SCC Report a Problem. Liaise with clerk to escalate where no action is taken.</li><li>4. (possibly) commission use of a drone to identify flooding issues.</li></ol> The group would ideally open up to individual greens, recruiting residents from each. A Community Speed Watch Group (at least six volunteers). The meeting also asked the clerk to look further into setting aside funds in future budgets for a number of "parish days" which could include low level work on highways could be
-----------	--

<sup>1</sup> 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.

**Signed:** Paul Couzens

**Dated:** 4/04/2024

# Wickhambrook Parish Council – Estates Committee

	completed by an appointed contractor (in a similar manner to our grounds maintenance days) e.g. a) cutting back vegetation around road signs b) cleaning road signs and identifying faded or damaged signs for replacement c. clearing out grips identified by volunteer team. The meeting asked the clerk to consider a coffee hub as a recruitment opportunity.
23.11.9.1	<b>Resolved</b> Wickhambrook Parish Council resolves to: 1. Support the Climate and Ecology Bill; 2. Inform local residents and inform local press/media of this decision; 3. Write to RH Matthew Hancock MP to inform them that this motion has been passed, and urge them to support the CE Bill
23.11.10.7	<b>Resolved</b> To update the Parish Council's authorised signatories to its Unity Trust accounts, making provision for Mel Karunaratne to be added as an authorised signatory (view only).
23.11.11	<b>Resolved</b> <b>To approve transfer between revenue budget lines and transfer of funds from Earmarked Reserves to Revenue budget lines as indicated in Tables 1 and 2 respectively of report WPC.23.11.06 and note net changes to earmarked reserves.</b>
23.11.14	14.1 DC/23/1722/HH - Householder planning application detached swimming pool building (following demolition of existing outbuildings) Park Gate House Ousden Road Wickhambrook Suffolk CB8 8UT <b>No objections</b> 14.2 DC/23/1736/VAR - Planning application Variation of condition 3 of SE/13/0948/FUL to enable the omission of the first floor for the one dwelling (following demolition of fire damage dwelling) Samples Farmhouse Ashfield Green Wickhambrook CB8 8UZ <b>No objections</b> 14.3 <b>Resolved:</b> That the Clerk make known the Council's comments on planning applications above to the Corporate Manager, Growth & Sustainable Planning at West Suffolk Council.
23.11.16	<b>Resolved</b> That the Clerk draw up a contract for groundworks for the financial year 2024/25 as determined by the meeting following their consideration of quotes for the specification and areas identified in Appendices to report WPC.23.11.06.
23.11.17	<b>Resolved</b> The parish council adopt the proposed fees and charges, (taking into account any revisions agreed at the meeting) set out at Table 2 to WPC.23.11.07) with effect from 1st April 2024.
23.11.18	<b>Resolved</b> The parish council authorise a contribution to the maintenance and repair of the Memorial Clock of not more than £1300 plus VAT.
23.11.19	<b>Resolved</b> The parish council authorise the cost of conveyancing work to register land at Figures 1 & 2 of report WPC.23.11.09, at a cost of not more than £2050.00 plus VAT.
23.11.20	The Chair's report with respect to Clerk's salary and the approval of national annual pay award for 2023/24 (previously circulated as Chair's Report) and the revisions to contract arising from this.
<b>January</b>	
24.01.7.4	<b>Resolved</b> The parish council adopt the revised Terms of Reference for the Estates Committee (Appendix C) and Road Safety Working Group (Appendix D).
24.01.8.1	The meeting asked the clerk to make the necessary arrangements for Cllr Karunaratne's internet banking authority be updated from View account to VA (view the account and authorise payments) and <b>Resolved:</b>
24.01.8.3	Remove the Sandy Thwaite as signatory to the Council's accounts with Unity Trust Bank <b>Resolved</b>
24.01.9	To adopt the reviewed Risk Management Policy and supporting Risk Assessment attached as Appendices A & B respectively to report WPC.24.01.03. <b>Resolved</b>

**Signed:** Paul Couzens

**Dated:** 4/04/2024

# Wickhambrook Parish Council – Estates Committee

	9.1	That Council appoints Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC) as Internal Auditors for the financial year 2023/2024; and
	9.2	That Wickhambrook Parish Council confirms Hilary Workman to continue to act as the Responsible Financial Officer for the financial year 2024/25
24.01.12	12.2	<b>Resolved</b> That Wickhambrook Parish Council approve the proposed budget (Appendix A to report WPC 24.01.07), and
	12.3	<b>Resolved</b> That Wickhambrook Parish Council directs West Suffolk District Council to pay the sum of £46,341, being the Parish Council's total precept requirement for the financial year commencing 1st April 2024
24.01.14	14.1	DC/23/2038/HH Householder Planning Application a. single storey side extension to south elevation (following removal of existing conservatory); b. two storey extension to north elevation; c. conversion of existing barn to include garage and gym with first floor extension to create habitable space Australia Farm Meeting Green Wickhambrook Suffolk CB8 8UR See summary report WPC.24.01.08 Councillors considered that the proposals would be likely to improve the property significantly and <b>supported application</b>
	14.2	<b>Resolved:</b> That the Clerk make known the Council's comments on planning applications above to the Corporate Manager, Growth & Sustainable Planning at West Suffolk Council.

The meeting thanked Roger Medley for his kind offer to volunteer to both the Community Speed Watch and as a flooding volunteer, and Cllr Lavelle, who kindly offered to lead any flooding work parties.

The meeting noted Mr Kevin and Mrs Angela Grimes' advice that flooding would be better if the ditches were dug out each year and particularly the need for roadside grips to be cleared, as otherwise there would be nowhere for the water to run off roads into the ditches.

## 24.02.07 **Noted:**

The meeting received and discussed report to this meeting from Portfolio Holders as summarised below:

- 7.1 **Parish Assets** (defibrillator) **Cllr Couzens**  
An oral report from Cllr Couzens advising that the Defib case at the MSC was now dry and the battery had been checked.
- 7.2 **Environment & Sustainability** **Mrs M Jolland**  
An oral report from the clerk on behalf of Mrs Jolland advising that provisional dates for litter picks had been identified as:  
Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2<sup>nd</sup> June and 3<sup>rd</sup> November  
And that Cemetery Tidy mornings would resume, meeting at the Chapel of Rest on 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of each month between March and October.
- 7.3 **Footpaths officer report** (previously circulated) **Mr R. Medley**  
Mr Medley further advised that
- the post and rail fence at FP16 Cloak Lane to Attleton Green which had restricted the width of the path had been removed that day.
  - With assistance from Cllr Lavelle, low hanging branches at bottom of Six Acres and at FP24 between Recreation Ground/Six Acres and the cemetery would shortly be removed.
  - PROW have carefully checked the footpaths records and established that whilst Footpath 26 (from Cemetery Road down to the steps at the far end of Six Acres) did once extend beyond its junction with Footpath 25 (Coltsfoot Green to Wickhambrook School) across to Coltsfoot Close, there is no current

**Signed:** Paul Couzens

**Dated:** 4/04/2024

## Wickhambrook Parish Council – Estates Committee

funding available to establish a footbridge necessary to extend the path as far as Coltsfoot Close. There being no egress into Coltsfoot Close, PROW have taken the view that resources would best be allocated to maintaining and improving access to footpaths which form part of the wider network around the parish and improve connectivity for residents of and visitors to the parish.

7.4 **Tree Warden's report** (previously circulated) **Mr R. Medley**

7.5 Youth Facilities **Cllr Lavelle**

7.5.1 Main Playground

7.5.2 Teen Project and Games Area

7.5.3 Zip Wire - fine

7.5.4 Bury Road Playground

**Mr K Grimes**

An oral report from Andrea and Kevin Grims that the:

- chain link fence requires some remedial work
- child's basket swing was becoming worn through abuse by older children
- blue car was showing rust in some joints but had not deteriorated.
- Cherry tree by the gate appeared to be in decline – The meeting asked the clerk to get the tree checked and if necessary pruned.

7.6 **Six Acres** **Cllr M Lavelle**

An oral report from Cllr Lavelle that:

- there were some rabbit scrapes in the vicinity of the inner banks at the far end of Six Acres and also in the banks and around the football container near the Bowls Club. The meeting asked the clerk to look into the feasibility of establishing a defined compost area outside the bowls club (currently clippings being spread across a wider area of the concrete pad)
- The (West Suffolk) sign at the bottom of Six Acres asking dog owners to pick up waste had been damaged and would be repaired.

7.7 **Cemetery and Churchyard Safety Reports** **Cllr P Couzens**

An oral report from Cllr Couzens advising that the cemetery was looking good and requesting that the online reporting tool link be sent again.

7.8 **Village Greens Report** **Mr R Medley**

An oral report from Mr Medley that:

- A dead tree under power lines at \* had been reported
- The pond at Attleton Green was currently full – there were a number of branches in the water. The meeting asked the clerk to instruct the grounds team to look at the health of those trees.

The meeting also noted continued flooding on the road from Meeting Green to Boyden End (reported to SCC Highways by the clerk again) and that the newly installed gate from the Memorial Garden onto the footpath was currently impossible to close – Cllrs Lavelle and Couzens kindly offered to look at remedial measures to address this.

## Wickhambrook Parish Council – Estates Committee

### **24.02.08 Noted:** Clerk's report

8.1 Update on current Estates Issues (previously circulated as **WPC.EC.24.02.01**) and **Resolved**

**The Estates Committee authorise**

- i. **the purchase of a sustainable bench (upto three seater) at a cost of not more than £232.52 plus VAT; and**
- ii. **the purchase of two replacement signs for Six Acres and the Children's play area at a cost of not more than £50.00 plus VAT.**
- iii. **The purchase of a small tool kit and garden kneeler at a cost of not more than £40.00 plus VAT.**

8.2 that the actions agreed under the 3 year plan considered by the parish council in setting its budget for the next financial year (2024/25), the approved budget for the next financial year and proposed schedule of works for the Estates Committee (previously circulated as **WPC.EC.24.02.02**) be noted with no amendments.

8.3 that following the parish council's approval of a grant towards the cost of bringing the Memorial Clock back into commission at its November meeting (**Min. 23.11.18 refers**) Hawards Horological were instructed by the PCC but the work had not yet been completed.

8.4 that the clerk had raised a number of issues with the Play Area Inspector at West Suffolk where work completed had not been noted on subsequent inspection reports.

### 24.02.09 **Noted:**

The meeting considered a proposal for authorising the costs of play equipment supplies and remedial works arising from play inspections (previously circulated as **WPC.EC.24.02.03**) and, there being no amendments identified, but noting that the combined costs of the current and next financial year exceed £3000, asked the clerk to refer the proposal to the parish council for consideration at its February meeting.

### **24.02.10 Noted:**

The meeting considered a proposal for remedial work to the remaining memorials identified as unsafe where it has not been possible to contact the deed holders (previously circulated as **WPC.EC.24.02.04**), and testing of memorials at All Saints Churchyard. The meeting noted the clerk's advice that clarification be sought as to whether any stake and banding arising from memorial testing in All Saints Churchyard would require a faculty before instructing any testing, and

**Resolved**

**To appoint a contractor to undertake memorial testing in All Saints Churchyard at a cost of not more than £500.00 plus VAT for the financial year 2024.25**

The meeting further asked the clerk to bring back a proposal for remedial work to the staked and banded headstones in Wickhambrook Cemetery where deed holders had not responded (based on sinking the headstones) to the April meeting.

### **24.02.11 Noted:**

The meeting considered a proposal to change the suppliers of Cemetery software previously circulated as **WPC.EC.24.02.05**) and

**Resolved**

**The Estates Committee authorise a move to Scribe cemetery software at a cost of £645 plus VAT in the first financial year.**

# Wickhambrook Parish Council – Estates Committee

## 24.02.12 Noted:

**The meeting** considered proposals for refurbishment of the cemetery in advance of D-Day 80 (previously circulated as **WPC.EC.24.02.06**). Having agreed their preferred WW2 Memorial Bench (Royal Navy Past and Present), the meeting asked the clerk to explore further options for the cleaning of the War Memorial and report back to its April meeting. The Chairman withdraw the proposal below:

**The Estates Committee authorise:**

- i. the purchase of a WW2 Memorial Bench Seat as specified above at a cost of not more than £1741 plus VAT;**
- ii. the cost of cleaning the War Memorial in advance of DDay80 at not more than £2000 plus VAT.**

and

**Resolved** (the substituted proposal):

**The Estates Committee authorised the purchase of a WW2 Memorial Bench Seat as specified above at a cost of not more than £1741 plus VAT;**

## 24.02.13 Noted:

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

- Tri-annual inspection of trees on parish lands and other proposed tree works
- Meeting dates currently listed for 13<sup>th</sup> June and 15<sup>th</sup> August be revised to:
  - 11<sup>th</sup> July; and
  - 12<sup>th</sup> September

## 24.02.14 Noted:

The scheduled date for the next meeting is 4<sup>th</sup> April 2024 in the Pavilion, Wickhambrook Memorial Social Centre

## 24.02.15 Noted: Close of meeting.18:43pm