

Wickhambrook Parish Council – Estates Committee

Minutes

Of a meeting of the Estates Committee held on 11 July 2024

Present: Cllrs P Couzens, M Lavelle, M Karunaratne, Mr R Medley, Mr D Di Giulio

Attending: Clerk Hilary Workman
Cllr Andrea Grimes, Mr Kevin Grimes

24.07.01 **Noted:**

Cllr Paul Couzens having been appointed Chair of the Committee by the Parish Council, to appoint a Vice-Chair and receive declaration(s) of Acceptance of Office.

24.07.02 **Noted:** Apologies for absence to be noted or approved:

- Approved: Mrs Mary Jolland – Personal Business

24.07.03 **Noted:**

That when invited, there were:

- No Members' Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Other Registerable Interests in subsequent Agenda items; and
- No additions nor deletions to the Council's Register of Interests.

24.07.04 Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Estates Committee meeting held on 4th April 2024, as tabled, be agreed as a true record

24.07.05 **Noted:** Public Forum – (**Open Session**)¹. 19:02

When comments or questions on any Agenda item or matter of concern from those members of the public present were invited, the following

1. Cllr Andrea Grimes – the public footpath from Clopton down to Wickham Street was very overgrown – the clerk confirmed that footpaths are the responsibility of Suffolk County Council (PROW) and issues can be plotted on the SCC report a problem page
2. Cllr Andrea Grimes – having recently completed initial training through SALC, requested that for clarity voting on resolutions be by a show of hands

Closed 19:04

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

- 6.1 Sovereign Play – Sovereign Compliance – see agenda item 13
- 6.2 Local Resident – unkempt area to rear of Croft Close (scheduled for cut 4/7)
Cllrs Lavelle and Couzens confirmed that this area had been cut, though not to a high standard
- 6.3 Local Resident – damage to vase on memorial in cemetery

24.07.07 **Noted:** Decisions of the Parish Council at its April and May meetings:

**April
Ordinary**

24.04.04	Resolved That the Minutes of the Parish Council ordinary meeting held on 29th February 2024, as tabled, be agreed as a true record.
24.04.04	4.1 Resolved That Kevin Grimes be co-opted on to Wickhambrook Parish Council to serve as a councillor forthwith.

¹ 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: Mel Karunaratne

Dated: 12/09/2024

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- 24.04.10.1 Resolved
i) To authorise expenditure for print toner in the current financial year at a cost of not more than £600 plus VAT.
ii) To authorise the cost of call out charges when needed to resolve IT issues on the parish laptops, to a maximum of £150 plus VAT for the current financial year.
- 24.04.10.10** Resolved
The parish council authorise the purchase of a replacement battery for the defibrillator at a cost of not more than £ 238.50 plus VAT.
- 24.04.11** Resolved
That this Council receives and approves the Financial Risk Assessment (circulated & tabled as Appendix B of WPC.24.04.06) as being a proper assessment of the financial risks facing the Council and that it demonstrates that appropriate management of those risks is in place and that the Chairman of this Meeting should sign the Financial Risk Assessment thereby tabled as properly reflecting the assessment of the Council's financial risk.
- 24.04.12 12.1 Resolved
That this Council acknowledges receipt of the Internal Audit Report on the year ending 31.03.24, as commissioned from Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC), (Min. 24.01.09.1 refers) and circulated and tabled as Appendix F of WPC.24.04.07, noting that the Council continued to maintain effective governance arrangements including a robust framework of financial administration and internal controls and the recommendations made which require action on the part of either the Council or the Council's Responsible Finance Officer
- 12.2 Resolved
That, as per the Annual Governance and Accountability Return under the Account and Audit Regulations 2015, this Council approves the accounts for the 12 months ended 31.03.24, (circulated and tabled as Appendix D of WPC.24.04.07) and authorises the Chairman and the Responsible Finance Officer to sign them as approved.
- 12.3 Resolved
That this Council approves the Annual Governance Statement, (circulated and tabled as Section 1 of the Annual Return to the External Auditor, at Appendix G of WPC.24.04.07) as demonstrating a sound system of internal control including the preparation of the accounting statement at Section 1 of the Annual Return for the year ended 31.03.24 and that the Council Chairman and the Parish Clerk be authorised to sign a Statement of Confirmation of such approval.
- 12.4 Resolved
That this Council approves the Accounting Statement, (circulated and tabled as Section 2 of the Annual Return to the External Auditor, at Appendix H of WPC.24.04.07) as being a fair presentation of the Council's financial position and of its income and expenditure for the year ended 31.03.24 and that the Council Chairman be authorised to sign a Statement of Confirmation of such approval
- 24.04.12.5 To note that the period for public inspection of the Annual Accounts will be between Monday 3rd June – Friday 12th July 2024 and a notice will be published and posted to that effect
- 24.04.13.3 13.3 Resolved
That the payments to be made, listed above at 13.2 be authorised.
- 24.04.13.7 Agreed: Update the Parish Council's authorised signatories to its Unity Trust accounts, making provision for Kevin Grimes to be added as an authorised signatory (view only).
- 24.04.14 Resolved
To approve transfer of funds equivalent to the underspends from revenue budget (highlighted in yellow on Appendix A) into the relevant Earmarked Reserves indicated in Appendix B of report WPC.24.04.09 and note net changes to earmarked reserves.
- 24.04.15 Resolved
To approve transfer of funds from Earmarked Reserves to revenue budget lines as indicated in Table 1 of report WPC.24.04.10 and note net changes to earmarked reserves.
- 24.04.16 Resolved
i. £240.24, being the cost of First Aid & Medical Cover for the Wickhambrook Summer Fete; and
ii. £170 towards the cost of bulbs for autumn Planting as part of the National Big Help Out undertaken by Women's Institute members in Wickhambrook

Signed: Mel Karunaratne

Dated: 12/09/2024

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- 24.04.18 DC/24/0180/HH - Householder planning application
Retention of two outbuildings
Lane Cottage Coltsfoot Green Wickhambrook Suffolk CB8 8UW
No objection
DC/24/0319/FUL Planning application – see report WPC.24.04.12_DC.24.0319.FUL
Agricultural building
Peacocks Farm Farley Green Wickhambrook Suffolk CB8 8PX
No objection
DC/24/0371/TPO - -TPO 504 (2010) tree preservation order
One Oak (T1 on plan and on order) works as per annotated photo
17 The Meadows Wickhambrook Newmarket Suffolk CB8 8GW
No objection
DC/24/0385/HH - Householder planning application
a. single storey rear extension
b. first floor rear extension with balcony
5 Clopton Yard Giffords Lane Wickhambrook Suffolk CB8 8QB
No objection
DC/24/0436/VAR - Planning application
variation of condition 2 of DC/22/1810HH to allow use of amended drawings
04 and 05 to allow for roof form changes
6 Wickham House Bungalows Giffords Lane Wickhambrook CB8 8PH
No objection
- 24.04.20 The clerk having left the room, the meeting considered the Chair's report with respect to Clerk's salary and annual leave (previously circulated) and following discussion, invited the clerk to return to the meeting and confirmed their approval of the annual pay award and noted change of the leave entitlement in accordance with the terms of contract.
- 24.05.01 The meeting elected Cllr Mike Lavelle as Chairman of the Council for the coming year.
- 24.05.02 The meeting elected Cllr Paul Couzens as Vice Chairman of the Council for the coming year.
- 24.05.06 Resolved
That the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 25th April 2024, as tabled, be agreed as a true record.
- 24.05.07 The meeting reviewed the delegation arrangements to committees and staff (previously circulated as WPC.24.05.01), and having noted any changes, approved them.
- 24.05.08 Resolved
That this Council adopts the reviewed Council documents listed above for publication.
- 24.05.10 The meeting considered proposals to appoint or to confirm the following officers of the Council (previously circulated as WPC.24.05.03) and confirmed appointments to the following posts (confirmed postholder in brackets)
10.1.1 Cemetery & Churchyard Officer (Cllr Andrea Grimes)
Cemetery Records Project (Cllr Andrea Grimes)
10.1.2 Emergency Planning (Cllr Mike Lavelle)
10.1.3 Environment & Sustainability Officer (Mrs Mary Jolland)
10.1.4 Footpath Officer (Mr Roger Medley)
10.1.5 Highways & VAS Officer (Cllr Paul Couzens lead, Cllr Kevin Grimes)
10.1.6 Internal Monitoring Officer (Cllr Mike Lavelle)
10.1.7 Neighbourhood Plan Working Grp (Cllr Tracey Turner lead, Cllr Linda Smith)
10.1.8 Planning Officer (Cllr Tracey Turner)
10.1.9 Youth Facilities Officer (Cllr Mel Karunaratne)
10.1.10 Play area inspections (Bury Road) (Cllr Kevin Grimes)
10.1.11 Play area inspections (Cem.Rd) (Cllr Mel Karunaratne)
10.1.12 Public Access Devices Officer (Cllr Paul Couzens)
10.1.13 Road Safety Working Group (Cllr Mel Karunaratne lead, Cllr Kevin Grimes)
10.1.14 SALC Area Meetings (Cllr Linda Smith)
10.1.15 Six Acres Officer (Cllr Mike Lavelle)
10.1.16 Tree Officer (Mr David Di Giulio)
10.1.17 Village Greens Officer (Mr David Di Giulio)
10.1.18 Village Recorder (Dorothy Anderson)
10.1.19 Social Media & News Officer (Cllr Linda Smith)

Signed: Mel Karunaratne

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- 10.2 To appoint or to confirm representatives of Council on the following bodies, or to take other action as appropriate:
United Charities (Mr Julian Wilson)
Mr Wilson provided a brief update on the United Charities, advising that:
- Two almshouses adjacent to All Saints Church had been established in 1634 by Antony Sparrow (believed to later be Bishop of Norwich).
 - The almshouses are Grade II, with thatched roofs, which are a challenge to maintain.
 - Finances for Wickhambrook United Charities were reasonably robust, with most expenditure being on running repairs to the almshouses.
- o In the previous year, a new water main had been put in, and porches maintained and re-painted.
 - o Next summer it is planned to replace the ridge on the thatch and aprons (below chimney), which would be likely to cost in region of £16k.
 - Mr Wilson has been a trustee since 2000 and treasurer of the United Charities since 2010. The meeting thanked Mr Wilson for his time and contribution to United Charities.
- 10.3 To appoint members to the following Committees (current post holders in brackets)
Estates Committee (Cllrs Couzens, Karunaratne & Lavelle)
- 10.4 In accordance with Standing Order 4 d)vi, to appoint the Chairman of the Estates Committee (Cllr Couzens)
- 10.5 In accordance with Standing Order 4 d)v, to appoint two substitute members to the Estates Committee whose role is to replace the ordinary members where they have confirmed to the Proper Officer three (3) days before the meeting that they are unable to attend. (Cllrs Kevin Grimes, Linda Smith)
- 24.05.12 The meeting reviewed inventory of land and other assets tabled as the Asset Register and confirm arrangements for insurance cover through Zurich Municipal in respect of all insurable risks (previously circulated as WPC.24.05.04) and identified no further actions.
- 24.05.13 Noted:
Confirmation of approved dates for meetings to the next Annual Meeting in 2024, to be held in The Pavilion, Memorial Social Centre, Wickhambrook unless otherwise advised.
2024/2025 Parish Council Meetings:
Thursday 25th July, 26th September, 28th November '24, 16th January, 27th February, 24th April & 29th May '25
2024/2025 Estates Committee Meetings:
Thursday 13th July, 12th September, 14th November '24 & 6th February, 3rd April '24
- 24.05.14 Noted:
The meeting confirmed the Signatories to the Council's accounts with the Unity Trust Bank, and authority levels, as below:
View & Authorise Cllrs P Couzens; M Karunaratne; L Smith, T Turner
View Only Cllrs M Lavelle, A Grimes, K Grimes
- 24.05.15 Noted:
That SALC would continue to provide the payroll service for the Council for the next financial year, at a cost of £99.00.
- 24.05.18.3 Resolved
The Parish Council delegate authority to the clerk to apply to Locality for a grant to underwrite the cost of the Environmental Impact Assessment required by West Suffolk Council.
- 24.05.20.3 20.3 Resolved
That the payments to be made, listed above at 20.2 be authorised.
- 24.05.23 23.1 DC/24/0474/FUL - Planning application
One dwelling with vehicular access
Land Adjacent To Aldersfield Place Farm Ashfield Green Wickhambrook Suffolk
The parish council considered this application and having considered:
1. The application and additional supporting documents available on West Suffolk's planning portal
 2. A briefing paper (Report WPC.Planning.24.05_DC.24.0474.FUL) prepared by the clerk
 3. Concerns raised by residents at Public Forum, and minuted under 24.05.17
 4. the following points identified by Cllrs at the meeting:

Signed: Mel Karunaratne

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- That the proposed development was not within the Settlement Boundary.
- That in their view there was little material difference to the application arising from the revisions to spacing, height of roof line and block plan and they therefore continued to object on the same basis as previous consideration.
- Cllr Lavelle - that a Neighbourhood Plan was being prepared and the existing proposals of the application would be unlikely to fit with the Design Codes of the proposed Neighbourhood Plan if approved by referendum.

The meeting determined to object to the application for the following reasons:

Settlement Hierarchy and Identity:

The proposed site is not within the published settlement boundary of Wickhambrook [RV3 – Housing Settlement Boundaries], but in designated countryside [CS4 – Settlement Hierarchy & Identity, DM5 – Development in the Countryside]. It is acknowledged that the proposal may be described as small scale residential development [DM5]

Sustainable Development:

- a. District Council policies seek to protect the countryside against unsustainable development. Further development of the green could adversely affect its built character and sense of place.
- b. The application does not appear to make provision for the installation of an electric charging points for the proposed dwelling. This could have a negative impact on air quality in the vicinity and is not consistent with the NPPF paragraphs 105 & 1101, Air Quality Planning Guidance, [CS2 – Conserving and where possible, Enhancing of Natural Resources including Air Quality], [DM14 – Protecting and Enhancing Natural Resources, Minimising Pollution and Safeguarding from Hazards], and Section 3.2 of Suffolk Parking Standards, which sets out requirements for electrical charging infrastructure.

Noise and Disturbance:

Site clearance, preparation and construction activities (including deliveries and removal of waste materials) would result in noise and disturbance to neighbouring properties, particularly at weekends and bank holidays, a material consideration.

Minimising Pollution and Safeguarding from Hazards:

Hazardous materials must be removed from site and not burnt, to ensure that there is no risk to contamination of ground or surface water and that the amenity of neighbouring areas is protected. Relevant policies are NPPF (paragraphs 170, 178, 179), (GP3), Policy CS2 (Sustainable Development) and Policy DM14.

Infrastructure Capacity:

that the provision of surface water disposal through a soakaway may increase the risk of surface water onto the highway within Ashfield Green, which already experiences regular flooding of the road (although this matter should have been adequately dealt with under application CON(A)/18/1442 – Application to Discharge ...Condition 6 (surface water drainage).

Risk of loss of amenity to neighbouring properties:

arising from the proposed development (the rear garden of Minori, to the south east of the site, and opposite, the front of the properties Rowlands & Red Gables). The overlooking of a property and/or loss of privacy is a material consideration. NPPF paragraph 130(f) and policies [DM2- development principles and local distinctiveness] and [DM22- residential design] are relevant.

23.2 Resolved

That the Clerk make known the Council's comments on planning applications above to the Corporate Manager, Growth & Sustainable Planning at West Suffolk Council.

24.05.26

Resolved

i. To authorise the purchase of additional storage for the Chapel of Rest and secure disposal of old papers in accordance with the parish council's Document Retention Policy at a cost of not more than £350 plus VAT.

ii. To approve disposal of spare furniture (pews, bearers, pulpit) free of charge (donations encouraged, for the purpose of supporting community organisations).

24.07.08 **Noted:** Reports from Portfolio Holders or other agencies

8.1 **Parish Assets (defibrillator)**

Cllr Couzens

Signed: Mel Karunaratne

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- Defibrillators at both sites checked and no outstanding or unresolved issues.
- 8.2 **Environment & Sustainability** **Mrs M Jolland**
The clerk reported orally that unfortunately the litter pick in June had not taken place due to lack of support. A further litter pick is planned for the last Sunday of July (28th July).
- 8.3 **Footpaths officer report** (previously circulated) **Mr R. Medley**
Mr Medley further advised that:
- landowners should be reminded to cut paths on both crop and waste land (they are also responsible for side-growth which can significantly impede access for footpath users – the meeting asked the clerk to prepare an item for the parish council website
 - Footpath 24: Coltsfoot green to Cloak Lane – the drop from footpath into the ditch running alongside is approximately 6' (water running through the ditch appears also to be undercutting the edge) and in many places occluded – it is getting dangerous and whilst posts and rails have been installed at one point, further work may be required. The meeting asked the clerk to contact PROW and also to put an item on the parish website.
 - 5 posts have been provided by PROW, which will be kept to one side for use as part of the Dogs Trust "Walk this Way" campaign (asking Dog owners to pick up after their dogs and correctly dispose of waste). The clerk confirmed that she was awaiting costs on this, which would be brought forward to the September meeting.
- 8.4 **Tree Warden's report** **Mr D Di Giulio**
An oral report from Mr Di Giulio advising that
- branches along the footpath down towards Commerce House were impeding use of the footpath. The meeting asked the clerk to write to the landowner requesting that they be cut back; and
 - The Tri-Annual tree survey had been completed and the report was awaited.
- 8.5 **Youth Facilities** **Cllr Karunaratne**
- 8.5.1 Main Playground
- 8.5.2 Teen Project and Games Area
- 8.5.3 Zip Wire
- An oral report from Cllr Karunaratne that both he and Cllr Grimes would be attending their course on inspecting play equipment on Tuesday 16th July.
- 8.5.4 Bury Road Playground **Mr K Grimes**
An oral report from Cllr Grimes that he had washed all the equipment that day – the contractors had not been collecting arisings from the cut in the play area, and the sides of all equipment was sprayed with grass cuttings, which were then being transferred across the upper surfaces.
The bin was now only being collected twice a month – the meeting asked the clerk to contact Andrew Harvey and request that this be collected weekly again.

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- 8.6 **Six Acres** **Cllr M Lavelle**
An oral report from Cllr Lavelle who advised that trimming of branches to trees at the lower end of Six Acres to take out lower growth could take place in the next few weeks and that the clerk would be provided with a date and risk assessment.
- 8.7 **Cemetery and Churchyard Safety Reports** **Cllr A Grimes**
An oral report from Cllr Grimes that:
- having met with Cllr Couzens and the clerk, she would carry out a safety check using the google form twice a month; and
 - she was helping the clerk with the cemetery records project, checking our records against memorials in the cemetery. As part of this, it was occasionally necessary to clean the headstones in order to be able to read them. The stonemason had advised to use a stiff bristle brush or plastic scraper to gently remove lichen.
- 8.8 **Village Greens Report** **Mr Di Giulio**
An oral report from Mr Di Giulio advising that he would meet up with the clerk on the 1st Wednesday in August to walk the greens and review the checklist.

24.07.09 Noted: Clerk's report

- 9.1 An update on current Estates Issues (previously circulated as **WPC.EC.24.07.01**). Cllr Grimes reported that Clare Auctions had indicated that the wooden pews currently stored in the Chapel of Rest, which the parish council had agreed would be disposed of free of charge (**Min 24.05.26 refers**) may have some value at sale. The meeting agreed to establish whether either the WI or PCC might have a use for the furniture, and if not, ask the parish council to consider revisiting the decision and if possible dispose of the items through a sale. The meeting agreed to a work party to clear the Chapel of Rest of extraneous items on first Wednesday in August.
- Resolved**
Authorise up to £200 plus VAT for consumables for cleaning down and treating benches and play equipment and replacement barrow wheel.
- 9.2 Work to onboard cemetery records to the new software supplier was progressing well, the first Burial Register records having been uploaded, and the transcription of the second register nearing completion. Thanks go to Cllr Andrea Grimes who was checking the Grave Space records against the memorials in the cemetery to identify any discrepancies.
- 9.3 The Tri-annual Inspection of Trees was undertaken by Acacia Tree Services (Min.24.04.09 refers) and the outcome would be reported back to the September Estates Committee.
- 9.4 Further to report **WPC.24.02.09**, (Min 24.02.14 refers) the clerk having raised a purchase order for replacement parts and works in April, this work was undertaken in May. Further to a number of additional issues identified in the play inspection reports, the clerk had submitted a further purchase order to On-line Playgrounds (Min. EC.24.02.14iii refers).

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- 9.5 The War Memorial was cleaned in advance of the commemorations of D-Day 80, and a "Royal Navy Past and Present" bench installed in the cemetery, with a further sustainable bench installed at the far end of Six Acres.



- 9.6 There remained some ongoing and outstanding quality issues with the appointed grounds contractor, TOPS Garden Services. The clerk, in consultation with the chair of the committee, had instructed R H Landscapes and Maintenance to cut and collect on the Recreation Ground and Six Acres in advance of the Wickhambrook Fete and Flower show at a cost of £400 plus VAT (the clerk having instructed the grounds contractor to do this work, but it not having been completed).
- 9.7 Remedial work to nine memorials required to be made safe almost complete. One further Memorial had also now been identified as unsafe and staked and banded.
- 9.8 The clerk was awaiting a response from the Dogs Trust with respect to their project "Walk this Way" which involves targeted messaging to dog walkers about cleaning up after their dogs. Thanks go to Mr Medley who had identified the following Public Rights of Way as suitable for this project:
- FPs 25 and 26
 - FP 24 (2 fingerposts and a waymark)
 - FP 23 (1 fingerpost) and
 - BY 31 (1 fingerpost and 1 waymark at the village end).

24.07.10 Noted:

The meeting considered proposal to install replacement posts bounding Coltsfoot Green (previously circulated as **WPC.EC.24.07.02**) and having reviewed the options asked the clerk to cost on the basis of a like for like replacement of all posts.

24.07.11 Noted:

The meeting considered a review of the Grounds Specification for the next financial year 2025/26 (previously circulated as **WPC.EC.24.07.03**) and asked the clerk to:

- take forward the proposals set out in the report to the next parish council meeting, (focussing on a reduction of some cuts and development of wildlife areas in low traffic zones); and
- Prepare some posters for display on the parish council stand at the Fete and Flower show as part of initial messaging for a summer consultation.

24.07.12 Noted:

The meeting considered a proposal to undertake work to trees in the parish cemetery (previously circulated as **WPC.EC.24.07.04**) and noting the likely costs, agreed that formal quotes should be requested once the full report on the Tri-annual inspection of parish trees was available.

Signed: Mel Karunaratne

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- 24.07.13 **Noted:**
The meeting noted an update to works to maintain parish play equipment (previously circulated as **WPC.C.24.07.05**).
- 24.07.14 **Noted:** That when any other Council business for information, to be noted or for inclusion on a future agenda were invited, the following:
- Set a further date for a summer litter pick – 28th July
 - Parish trees following Tri-annual Survey
 - Finalise Grounds contract specification
 - Review of cemetery regulations – to include, following consultation, a move towards more sustainable and environmentally friendly materials
- 24.07.15 **Noted:** That the scheduled date for the next meeting is 12th September 2024 in the Pavilion, Wickhambrook Memorial Social Centre
- 24.07.16 **Noted:** Close of meeting. 20:00