

Road Safety Update

The parish council agreed in November '22 that Road Safety Issues would be further reviewed once Community Actions under the Neighbourhood Plan were drafted (**Min. 22.11.8.3 refers**), and the relevant draft Community Actions are set out at **Appendix A** for information and a more detailed report looking at these will be submitted in November.

An update of ongoing issues is set out below, many of which, but particularly flooding, were raised by residents at the Draft Neighbourhood Plan consultation event on 4th November.

Wickham Street, 40mph review.

The clerk escalated this issue with the support of SC Cllr Bobby Bennett, and although considered again, the request for a reduction in the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph has been refused.

A further serious accident took place in Wickham Street in early November, and the clerk has again asked SC Cllr Bobby Bennett to escalate this issue and push for the much needed reduction in the speed limit.

Cllr Bennett had escalated this to the Director for Highways but we have not yet had a response.

Speeding in Wickhambrook

This has been raised a number of times, more recently following the installation of Quiet Lanes signage.

The VAS shared with Lidgate has been requested, and arrangements agreed for exchange. The parish SID has been returned to Westcotec for a service and a new battery and should be back in service in mid January.

Following interest in establishing a Community Speedwatch Group, Mr Graham McGregor from Moulton Community Speedwatch very kindly attended the November Meeting (Min. 23.11.05 and answered questions on how Community Speedwatch schemes operate. A more detailed item on the website inviting residents to sign up to the scheme is being drafted.

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 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.

Funding for this has been built into the draft budget for 2024-25.

Flooding in Wickhambrook

At its November meeting the parish council 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 focused on flooding issues reporting to a Cllr to:**

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
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.
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.
4. (possibly) commission use of a drone to identify flooding issues.
5. The group would ideally open up to individual greens, recruiting residents from each.

The terms of reference for the existing Road Safety Working Group established in August 2019 (Min.19.08.7.2.2, **Appendix B**) could be amended to incorporate this work, with issues affecting parish lands being reported through Estates Committee, and matters affecting Highways reporting directly to the parish council by a lead councillor.

Proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference for both Estates Committee and the Road Safety Working Group are attached as **Appendix C and D** respectively.

Recommendation:

The parish council adopt the revised Terms of Reference for the Estates Committee (Appendix C) and Road Safety Working Group (Appendix D).

Community Action 3 – Highways maintenance

The Parish Council will work with landowners and parishioners to ensure that actions are taken to improve and maintain the quality of Wickhambrook's network of roads and lanes. Emphasis will be placed upon matters to include:

- getting pot holes filled and repaired
- clearing ditches and drains
- maintaining hedges and verges.

Rationale for Community Action 3:

In the village questionnaire of March 2022, the majority of respondents recorded concerns about roads. Wickhambrook residents want to see better maintenance of the road system – including mending of pot holes; better drainage and maintenance of ditches in order to address problems with surface water and flooding; improved access and safety on pavements and pathways; and better maintenance of verges and hedges.

Community Action 4 – Traffic Management

The Parish Council will work with Suffolk Highways to ensure that actions are taken to make Wickhambrook's roads and lanes safer for all users, to manage traffic and to tackle speeding and inconsiderate road use. Priority will be given in the work of the parish's road safety working group to issues that include:

- inhibiting the speed of vehicular traffic
- ensuring that pavements are wide enough and well-maintained
- improving safety at crossing points and junctions.

Rationale for Community Action 4:

In the village questionnaire of March 2022, 90% of respondents argued that village infrastructure should be improved before any new building takes place. The majority of these respondents listed roads as the chief concern. Further, the largest number of concerns expressed in the development proposals survey carried out in April 2023 were about road safety and traffic management issues. Respondents argue for improvements in road safety around the village, for example, by improving junctions, imposing speed limits and creating better and safer pathways.

Community Action 5 – Footpaths and Bridleways

The Parish Council will take actions to maintain and enhance the network of safe and waymarked footpaths, bridleways and cycle routes around Wickhambrook. The Parish Council will also seek to work with the County Highways Department and neighbouring Parish Councils to extend this network further afield in order to develop safe off-road connections with settlements such as Ousden, Lidgate, Cowlinge, Stradishall, Denston, Depden and Hargrave.

Rationale for Community Action 5:

In the village questionnaire of March 2022, 62% of respondents indicated that they walk around the village and 19% cycle. Many people argued that the pavements and paths around the village are in need of maintenance (with many pavements needing to be widened) and that the roads need improvements in terms of repairs to potholes; signage; and better and safer crossing points. In all, 83% of respondents were in favour of the creation and maintenance of better footpaths and quiet lanes to make it safer and easier to get around the village and the wider parish on foot and bicycle.

Establishment of Working Group to consider issues of congestion and parking at Wickhambrook Primary Academy

At its meeting on 25th July 2019 the Parish Council considered report WPC19.07.01 (attached as WPC19.08.01 Appendix 1) and agreed that in order to:

- be able to reach and work more effectively with stakeholders; and
- allow sufficient time to develop and fully explore options which the Parish Council and other local authorities may be able to support and act upon

the best option was to separate this work from the ordinary meetings of the Parish Council, and determined that a Working Group be established (**Minute 19.07.07.2 refers**).

The meeting agreed that the formal constitution of a working group would be established at the August meeting, in advance of any expressions of interest from parishioners and stakeholders. There is no requirement for a working group:

- to give public notice of the meeting(s)
- for the public to have a right to attend meetings;
- to publish minutes of the meeting
- for a meeting to be quorate.

A number of Councillors to be appointed to the Working Group this, together with representatives from:

- Suffolk County Council
- West Suffolk Council (Localities and Communities)
- Wickhambrook Primary Academy:
 - Teachers
 - Parents
 - Governors
- Wickhambrook Memorial Social Centre
- Parishioners with an interest or skills set which might add to the work of the group.

The group should be self-supporting, and may meet at venues, dates and times set by the group.

A regular update should be forwarded to the Parish Council, and any proposed correspondence or publicity must be approved by the Parish Council.

The group will have no budgetary or decision-making responsibilities or authorities.

The work should be completed and proposals forwarded to the Parish Council for consideration not later than September 2020, at which point the working group will cease, unless the Parish Council considers that there is further significant work or research which may contribute to any proposal which the Parish Council may consider.

Relevant Minutes:

19.07.07.2

Estates Committee Terms of Reference

1. Purpose of the Committee

The Committee shall be called the Wickhambrook Parish Council Estates Committee.

The committee is established to:

- manage, maintain and improve the sports and recreational facilities cemetery and parish lands on behalf of the Parish Council.
- Liaise with other statutory bodies (e.g. Suffolk County Council PROW, Environment Agency etc to maintain and improve opportunities for recreation through open access schemes (e.g Footpaths and Byways)

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2. Appointment of the Committee

The Committee shall be appointed by the Parish Council at the Annual Parish Council Meeting.

3. Membership of the Committee

The Committee shall be comprised of

- three members of the Parish Council with a Chairman who will be elected annually at the Statutory Annual Meeting of the Parish Council; and
- four other (non voting) members

In accordance with **Standing Order 4 d)v**, 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 shall have been appointed by the Parish Council.

The Committee may appoint a Vice-Chairperson.

Both Chair-person (appointed by Parish Council) and vice-chair person shall be Parish Councillors.

4. Quorum

Three committee members, of whom two shall be Parish Councillors, shall form a quorum for all meetings of the committee.

The quorum for a sub-committee or advisory committee shall be determined when the sub-committee is established.

~~Three members of the Committee (two councillors, and one other) will constitute a quorum.~~

5. Meetings:

Meetings to occur as a minimum of one per quarter or subject to any matters that may require attention or discussion. Such meetings will be scheduled for the year and called by the Parish Clerk as Proper Officer to the Council.

Minutes of all meetings will be recorded by the Clerk (or any member nominated at the meeting if the clerk is unable to attend).

The Council's Standing Orders on the rules of debate (except those relating to standing and to speaking more than once) and the Standing Order on interest of members in contracts and other matters will apply to this committee.

If the numbers of the Councillors present (not including those debarred by reason of a declared interest) falls below the required quorum the meeting shall be adjourned, and any such business not transacted shall be transacted at the next meeting or on such other day as the Chairman shall arrange.

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6 Responsibilities of the Committee

- 6.1 To keep under review the provision of the sports, recreational -and parish lands for the residents of Wickhambrook, as below:
 - The Cemetery, including the surrounding hedgerows and the chapel
 - The Six Acres, including the bottom and side banks
 - The Village Greens
 - The Children's Playgrounds on the Recreation Ground and at Bury Road
 - The Churchyard, on behalf of the Borough Council
 - To ensure monthly inspection sheets are completed and submitted to the Clerk for the above areas, highlighting remedial action required.
- 6.2 To ensure that annual safety inspections are carried out to meet legal requirements for the above spaces.
- 6.3 To lead on and approve tenders for all aspects of maintenance and ground works for these areas in accordance with the Parish Council's financial regulations.
- 6.4 To manage use of the Parish Council's recreational grounds
- 6.5 To advise the Parish Council of the impact of proposals by owners or occupiers of land that may affect its recreational and sports facilities, cemetery or parish lands.
- 6.6 To review and set the level of the annual fees for use of the Cemetery
- 6.7 To review and recommend regulations for the Parish Council's Cemetery
- 6.8 To work in partnership with the Safer Neighbourhood Team to alleviate antisocial behaviour and vandalism in/on the Parish Council's sports and recreational facilities, cemetery and parish lands.
- 6.9 To work in partnership with appropriate funding bodies to improve the Parish Council's recreational and sports facilities, cemetery and parish lands.
- 6.10 To put forward to the Parish Council, proposals for any improvements, developments or any capital expenditure when requesting funding for the following year.
- 6.11 To prepare an annual report to summarise the work undertaken in the exercising of its delegated powers for consideration by the Parish Council.

7. Sub-committees

The Committee shall have the power to appoint sub-committees. Any sub-committee appointed shall include at least three Parish Councillors.

The Committee shall have the power to appoint advisory committees.

8. Procedures

The Committee and any appointed sub-committee shall be subject to all statutory procedures and Standing Orders as are applicable to the Parish Council.

9. Voting Rights

Members of the committee or of appointed sub-committees who are not Parish Councillors shall be non-voting members in accordance with Section 13 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

All members of appointed advisory committees shall have equal voting rights. The Chairperson shall have a casting vote on all committees.

10. Financial

Expenditure by the Committee shall be within limits set by the Parish Council. No expenditure or commitments beyond these limits without the prior approval of the Parish Council by resolution at a properly constituted Parish Council meeting.

All expenditure shall be subject to formal resolution and to a simple majority vote of the Parish Council members of the Committee. Orders for approved work shall be placed in the name of and be invoiced to the Parish Council.

11. Records

Minutes shall be kept of all meetings of the committee and of any sub-committee or advisory committee. The minutes of each meeting of the Committee shall be presented at the subsequent Parish Council meeting.

All correspondence and quotations relating to the work of the Committee or subcommittee must be kept and shall be made available to the Parish Council as required. Records of all expenditure must be kept and shall be presented to the Parish Council as required.

12. Variation

The terms of reference shall be as defined by the Parish Council and no alteration shall be made other than by resolution of the Parish Council.

Terms of Reference for Road Safety Working Group

Establishment:

Working Group established by the parish council at its meeting on 29th August 2019 (Min 19.08.7.2.2) and terms of reference amended at its meeting on 11th January 2024

Purpose:

To research and consider viable options for:

- resolving access and congestion issues in the vicinity of Wickhambrook Primary Academy
- Reducing speeding within:
 - The established Settlement Boundary
 - Wickham Street; and
 - Through established Quiet Lanes
- Improving road safety across the parish impacted by:
 - Poor or inadequate signage
 - Flooding

Objectives:

- be able to reach and work more effectively with stakeholders; and
- allow sufficient time to develop and fully explore options which the Parish Council and other local authorities may be able to support and act upon
- recruit and support volunteers to undertake risk assessed activities which can inform the parish and its stakeholders

Constitution:

A number of Councillors to be appointed to the Working Group this, together with representatives from:

- Suffolk County Council
- West Suffolk Council (Localities and Communities)
- Wickhambrook Primary Academy:
 - Teachers
 - Parents
 - Governors
- Wickhambrook Memorial Social Centre
- Parishioners with an interest or skills set which might add to the work of the group

The group will have no budgetary or decision-making responsibilities or authorities.

The work should be completed and proposals forwarded to the Parish Council for consideration not later than September 2025¹, at which point the working group will cease, unless the Parish Council considers that there is further significant work or research which may contribute to any proposal which the Parish Council may consider.

Location and Frequency of meetings:

The group should be self-supporting, and may meet at venues, dates and times set by the group.

Requirements:

There is no requirement for a working group:

- to give public notice of the meeting(s)
- for the public to have a right to attend meetings;
- to publish minutes of the meeting
- for a meeting to be quorate.

¹ The parish council considered that there was further work to be done and for this reason the group continued to meet on an ad hoc basis.

A regular update should be forwarded to the Parish Council (or relevant established committee), and any proposed correspondence or publicity must be approved by the Parish Council.