

MINUTES OF THE WOOLPIT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 2
SEPTEMBER 2025 AT 7.00 P.M. IN WOOLPIT INSTITUTE

Present: Dr Geake (Chair), Mrs Osborne-Lomax, Mrs Hammond, Miss Tomlinson, Mr Guyler, Ms Thomas and Mr Hardiman.

In attendance: County Cllr Mellen (in part), District Cllrs Mansel and Overett, Mrs Fuller, Clerk and 3 members of the public.

Dr Geake advise that Mrs Jenkins has resigned from the Parish Council. She had been a member of the council for 8 years and had taken on responsibility for the allotments, the plants in the centre of the village and represented WPC on the Institute Committee and the Good Neighbours. Her medical expertise was also very valuable. She will be greatly missed and was thanked for all her hard work.

It was unanimously agreed to bring forward item 3 to allow County Cllr Mellen to leave to attend other meetings.

1.Apologies for absence. There were none.

3. County & District Councillors reports.

District Councillors' Report: The council released draft proposals on its proposed 3-unitary model, which included splitting Suffolk into a "Western", "Central & Eastern", and "Ipswich and Southern". As neither Mid Suffolk nor Babergh comfortably fits into this model, this would see the two councils effectively broken up across the 3 councils. A full website on the 3-unitary model, including the proposed map effecting these changes. There will be two public sessions about the LGR where you are invited to come along and ask questions. These are Wednesday 10 September at the Food Museum Marquee 6-8 p.m. and Monday 15 September at Eye Town Council 6-8 p.m. The UK's largest professional cycle race is due to come through Mid Suffolk in early September. The event starts within East Suffolk, before running through Stowmarket, as well as visiting other parts of the district, including Debenham and Eye. 12 new electrical recycling banks (6 in Mid Suffolk, and 6 in Babergh) have been installed across the two districts. This is part of a new scheme of just under £800k to help reduce e-waste across the district. More information about where these banks are can be found on MSDC's website. Closest ones to Woolpit are at Elmswell Station, Thurston New Green Centre, Iliffe Way carpark in Stowmarket and at Stowmarket Leisure Centre. Mid Suffolk Cabinet have agreed to invest in 30 new properties in the district to be used for temporary emergency accommodation. To be eligible to be accommodated someone must be legally homeless and meet all the necessary immigration and residence condition, and have a priority need for housing. This investment will reduce the Council's reliance on having to use B&B accommodation, and will save revenue in the long term. The appeal hearing for the Care Home proposal on School Road, Elmswell is taking place at the Blackbourne Centre, Elmswell Thursday 4 – Friday 12 September. Public are able to attend. Our monthly drop-in sessions are ongoing, when we are available for residents to meet us and discuss local issues. Our next sessions are Thursday 9 October at Green Wolf Café, Woolpit, Tuesday 4 November at Wesley Café, Elmswell and Wednesday 10 December at Green Wolf Café, Woolpit all 10-12.

Mr Hardiman asked for an update on the electric car points in the car park behind the Health Centre. These are due to be installed during September and the planting of shrubs is well overdue.

Mrs Fuller advised that she has two outstanding issues with MSDC regarding the car park opposite the church. A request was sent for a car park sign and an initial response was received but nothing further and the issue of the broken gate post has had no response. The Clerk was asked to forward correspondence to District Cllrs Mansel and Overett.

County Councillor's Report: As you may remember from last month's report a motion was tabled at July's council meeting to make it easier for communities to obtain a 20mph limit where there is clear local support for it. It was argued that the current process with SCC Highways is lengthy and unnecessarily complex at a time when 20mph limits have increasing public support. This motion was rejected by the administration on the grounds that they were already planning a review of this process. 20's Plenty, a UK organisation that promotes lower speed limits, has some helpful guidance and a draft motion for parish and town councils who are considering a 20mph speed limit, with lots of supporting information including data from the 20mph trial in Wales which showed that lower speed limits significantly reduced accidents, deaths and serious injuries with no impact on journey times. Following the passing of a motion at July's council meeting which acknowledged that intervention was necessary to reduce the reliance on the Orwell Bridge, the council's administration have announced a review of transport infrastructure for Suffolk and requested funding from the government to make improvements. The review will examine what is needed and where, examining areas such as the Orwell Bridge and the A14 corridor, Port of Felixstowe, the Sizewell power stations, and the need to upgrade the Ely/Haughley rail junction, which the government recently announced there would be no money for. The review will also take into account housing needs and the role of the future Mayor for Norfolk and Suffolk, who will have responsibility for strategic transport. The council has sent an open letter to the Transport Secretary, Heidi Alexander MP, calling for talks about the need for strategic investment in Suffolk's transport infrastructure. A new environmental charity jointly established by Sizewell C, East Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council has pledged to spend at least £78m on boosting biodiversity in Suffolk. The charity, named East Suffolk Trust (EaST), will distribute funds to local organizations through a grants scheme to improve biodiversity and protect natural landscapes. Governed by a Board of independent Trustees, the new charity could help to set out how future major infrastructure projects can help deliver local nature recovery across the country. Sizewell C has pledged at least £78m over the next 70 years, and in addition, the charity will seek funding from other local businesses and organisations to invest in nature. Trustees of the charity include Julian Roughton, former CEO of Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Heather Broughton MBE, former trustee of the National Lottery Heritage Fund and James Alexander MBE, former trustee of RSPB and former Chair of trustees at Suffolk Wildlife Trust. As part of the new 'Simpler Recycling' laws brought in by the previous Conservative government, councils will have to collect and deal with food waste from all Suffolk households from 2026. The council has set up a four-year contract with Bio Capital to process this food waste locally at a recently approved anaerobic digestion plant at the Adnams Distribution Centre in Reydon near Southwold. Around 31,000 tonnes of household food waste could be sent to the new facility each year, which will be processed to generate green fuel (biomethane), and turned into soil fertiliser, which means Suffolk's food waste will be put to good use. The council recently played host to pupils and school staff at the first in-person Junior Road Safety Officer (JRSO) Awards event since before the COVID-19 pandemic. The awards ceremony is to recognise the dedication and creativity shown by schools and pupils in promoting road safety and encouraging active travel within their communities. The Junior Road Safety Officer (JRSO) scheme has been running for more than 20 years and gives pupils in Years 4 to 6 (ages 9–11) the opportunity to get involved in road safety work at their schools, delivering sessions to peers and taking on initiatives in their wider communities. The scheme is an excellent way to engage with children, parents and carers and expand the reach of the council's road safety education team, with 61 participating schools over the last 12 months. As of 31 March 2025, Suffolk has welcomed 1,747 Ukrainian refugees under the government's Homes for Ukraine scheme, supported by a special team in the Public Health &

Communities directorate. The government has introduced the Ukraine Permission Extension Scheme (UPES), which allows people currently living in the UK under an existing Ukraine Visa scheme to apply to extend their stay in the UK for a further 18 months when their valid Ukrainian visa expires. The government pays Homes for Ukraine hosts a 'thank you' payment of £350 per month, and in Suffolk this is supplemented by an additional £25 per month by the council. Finally, Suffolk County Council is offering a one-off Independent Living Payment (ILP) of £2,000 to Homes for Ukraine guests who are leaving their host accommodation and moving into their own home. To issue this payment certain criteria must be met, and Suffolk County Council will ask to see a copy of a valid, signed and dated (by both parties) legal tenancy agreement in the guest's name. The funding can be used for purchasing items to support the move to independent accommodation. The new accommodation can be either furnished or unfurnished, and can be situated outside of Suffolk. County Cllr Mellen advised that there had been a near miss near the school which the police have been involved with and he is looking into getting a zebra crossing installed.

The potholes in Pyketts Way still have not been repaired and two cars have been stuck in the rut. It may be as this is the side of the highway it is not classed as a pothole. Cllr Mellen will look into this and see what can be done.

There are still concerns regarding vehicles exiting the EG petrol station. Cllr Mellen has asked for Give Way signs but has been advised it is not a give way and the arrow is the appropriate signage.

Concerns have been expressed by the various St George crosses painted on roundabouts and crossings. SCC has advised that their priority is always to ensure roads remain safe for motorists and all other users so they will consider removal where there is a safety issue. SCC is keeping a watchful eye on what is happening, but will need to balance the deployment of our operatives to tackle these issues with the need to manage the overall safety of the network on a daily basis.

2. Public comment: Mrs Parker advised that Woolpit Emergency Plan needs updating and new members of the team are needed.

Mr Hardiman advised that the new 'no dogs' signs at the playing field have been removed and one board with all notices ripped off and thrown in the hedge.

Ms Thomas advised that she is looking into a Youth Project and would like this to be an agenda item for the October meeting.

4. To receive declarations of interest and requests for dispensation.

Dr Geake declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 17 as a close resident to the village hall.

5. To approve the minutes of the meeting 5 August 2025

Mrs Osborne-Lomax asked for an amendment to item 13 Update from the CCTV control group line 8 to read "To put CCTV on a separate spur would need an electrical quote". With this amendment, the minutes were approved and signed.

6. Planning

a) to consider current applications

25/03380 Erection of a detached garage. Aysgarth, Broomhill Lane – no comment.

25/03119 Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed: Demolition of 7 no Buildings - Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) - Sch 2, Part 11, Class B. Loke Farm Wood Road – no comment.

25/03791 Application for Works to Trees subject to Tree Preservation Order MS196/W1 - Fell 3 No. Pine (T1 - T3), Crown raise 3 No. Sycamore (Labelled 1,3 and 4 on plan), thin crowns of 4 No. Sycamore (Labelled 1,2,3 and 4 on plan). 5 Wades Wood Woolpit - no comment.

b) to receive MSDC decisions.

25/02514 Discharge of Conditions Application for 23/03169 - Conditions 3 (Parking Details), 4 (HGV Construction Methodology), 5 (Hours of operation), 8 (Scheme to Control Litter) and 9 (Lighting Details), Land At Stag Cafe Old A45 – satisfied/acceptable.

25/03170 Discharge of Conditions Application for 22/04002 - Condition 8 (Archaeology - Plots 4 and 5), Condition 9 (Archaeology - Plots 5 and 5)), Condition 31 (Archaeology - Plot 6) Condition 32 (Archaeology - Plot 6) and Condition 39 (Great Crested Newt Licence - Plot 6), Lawn Park Business Centre Warren Lane – satisfied.

25/03422 Application for Non Material Amendment relating to DC/22/04002 - To provide two new internal accesses on to Plot 5 and an amendment to the Title of Condition 24, Plot 5 And 6 Land At Lawn Park Business Centre Warren Lane - approved.

25/03181 Application for a non-material amendment relating to DC/24/04207 - Revised materials plan to show the correct site layout as approved under the existing s73 permission. Land off Bury Road – approved.

25/02550 Discharge of Conditions Application for DC/23/05380 - Condition 5 (Hard Landscaping), 8 (Refuse and Recycling Bins) and 10 (Land Contamination). Land North East of Heath Road -satisfied.

25/02593 Discharge of Conditions Application for 19/02656 - conditions 4 (landscaping scheme), 6 (parking and manoeuvring), 10 (wildlife sensitive lighting design scheme), condition 12 (biodiversity enhancement strategy), condition 13 (landscape and ecological management), condition 19 (energy and resource efficiency measures). Land North East of Heath Road – acceptable/satisfied.

25/02867 Erection of Tractor Shed. Land Rear Of The Outfield Green Road – refused. The application provides insufficient demonstrable evidence to justify the need for the agricultural building outside the settlement boundary and unacceptably impacts the rural landscape and settings of nearby listed buildings. The proposed building, by virtue of its location, siting, domestic design and appearance, would not be sensitive to the rural landscape and would fail to conserve and enhance landscape character and the rural setting of Woolpit Green and would erode and detract from the rural setting of the Grade II listed buildings.

7. Clerk's Report

Church Street Road Narrows sign – has been hit and is at an angle. This has been reported to SCC who have advised they will monitor.

Casual vacancy – following Mrs Jenkins' resignation, the casual vacancy has been advertised.

Letter received marked Private and Confidential – Having contacted SALC for advice, if the letter concerns council business and has been sent to the Chair and Vice-Chair in their capacity as councillors, it should be treated as correspondence to the Parish Council. Parish councillors act as a body corporate, not as individuals acting independently. If the email contains accusations or inflammatory language, and particularly if it names individuals or could form the basis of a formal complaint, members are justified in discussing it in confidential session. The Proper Officer, the Clerk should coordinate the response on behalf of the Council.

Saffrons Close footway – a complaint from resident regarding grass cuttings being left on the footway and the condition of the path. The grass cutting issue has been reported to District Cllrs Mansel and Overett. The condition of the path has been reported to SCC which has received the standard response of they will monitor it.

Tree maintenance behind property in Steeles Road – complaint from a resident was referred to SCC who have closed the case with a statement they do not maintain

this area. The Clerk has contacted SCC again to ask who owns the land as it is part of a contract that MSDC undertakes which is usually on behalf of SCC.

Woolpit.org website – once the new website was established we asked our host 123 to remove the woolpit.org site. We believed this happened as we had not received any queries regarding it. However, in the last two months several people have contacted to Clerk to have information updated. It would appear that someone has purchased the domain for the next 2 years and as we do not hold the account there is nothing we can do to get it removed. We are surprised that the new owner still wants this outdated information on their website.

Potholes in cycle path, Heath Road – SCC has carried out repairs to those that meet the relevant criteria.

Quiz at the Village Hall, 20 September – it was agreed to enter a team.

8. To receive correspondence/communications and deal with any matters.

Resident issues with working hours at development behind the school will be reported to MSDC enforcement. **WVHC** letter regarding CIO and **Woolpit Cricket Club** use of amenity land from Hopkins Homes development for football pitches. Both letters were received after the agenda had been published and will be agenda items for the October meeting. **Woolpit ARC** request for funding to help with cash flow. WPC are unable to help as this is funding for the business and suggest they contact MSDC Community Officer or Woolpit Poor Lands Trust. **MSDC** regarding casual vacancy, if an election is requested it was agreed to ask that poll cards are issued only after the election is confirmed or contested. **The following items have been circulated to Cllrs:** **SALC** news bulletin 11, 18, 26 August, 1 September, training bulletin 12, 19, 26 August, 2 September, NSIP bulletin. **NALC** Chief Executive bulletin 7, 14, 21, 28 August. **SCC** advanced notice of overnight road closures in Woolpit. Elmswell, Wetherden and Haughley Old A45 31 August. **MSDC** Community Thermal Imaging project, LGR – more details and public meetings on our proposal for three unitary councils in Suffolk 10 & 15 September. Town & Parish update September, electrical recycling bins. **Rural Services Network** weekly news 13, 20, 27 August. **MARPA** Autumn 2025 newsletter. **CAS** Community led housing Zoom event 6 October. **County Cllr Mellen** operation 'Raise the Colours' campaign – SCC response. **Resident** thanks for the opportunity to commemorate VE80 and VJ80.

9. Finance

a) To receive a monthly financial report from the Clerk

The current account balance at the end of August was £25,072.18 and the savings account £603,082.33, total £628,154.51. With £4368.69 VAT to reclaim to date for current financial year, total funds are £632,523.20 of which CIL £480,244.83 (£220,215.20 is allocated), earmarked reserves £70,502.56, general reserve £37,000.00 and general funds £44,775.81.

b) To approve accounts for payment.

A payment of £100.00 to Mr J Farr Chocks Away for music and dancing at the VJ80 event was ratified. Mr Gardiner £535.50 Highway Ranger salary August, Mrs Fuller £1,253.24 Clerk salary August, Suffolk County Council £408.29 pension payment August, Mr Hardiman £196.80 reimbursement of £186.80 bread rolls for VJ80 barbeque and £9.90 keys for CCTV, Mrs Fuller £35.00 reimbursement for course through CAS for Mrs Osborne-Lomax, SALC £79.20 Councillor Basic training Miss Tomlinson 1 & 8 October, Mr P Raven £30.00 village signs renovation/varnishing, Equity pc £54.00 printer/scanner issue 5 August, Flagship AV £60.00 CCTV one-off review visit. All invoice were approved and payments authorised.

10. To consider Insurance renewal through Business Services at CAS and take any necessary action.

The Clerk has increased the Fidelity Guarantee cover to £500,000 and CAS now offer a three year long term undertaking at £1,506.20 per annum. It was agreed to take out the three year option.

Action: The Clerk.

11. To consider the purchase of outdoor cinema equipment and take any necessary action.

The equipment which we could buy from the Ice Cream Company is outdated and you have to wait until dusk to be able to see the screen. This meant that the screening of the film on VJ80 could not start until 9pm. We would have to purchase speakers and replacement bulbs are expensive. There are now screens that can be used at any time of day. It was agreed not to take this matter further. It was suggested that we look at the cost of more up to date equipment and then it would be possible to apply for Locality funding.

Action: The Clerk

12. To receive an update from the working group consider filling the casual vacancy by co-option and take any necessary action.

It was agreed to revamp the advert for Woolpit Diary and social media. Mrs Osborne-Lomax will draft this. It was suggested we hold another drop in session but at a weekend.

Action: Mrs Osborne-Lomax.

13. To receive a report on the event to commemorate VJ 80 and take any necessary action.

The morning events, barbeque and beacon were very successful but numbers for the film were disappointing. Mr Hardiman was thanked for all his efforts.

14. To receive an update from the CCTV control group following the initial inspection of the system, consider future CCTV requirements and take any necessary action.

Flagship AV has restored access to the CCTV and Mrs Osborne-Lomax and the Clerk can access remotely. A quote has been received for £200.00 to put an electrical spur in if required. In view of the Village Hall refurbishment WPC may wish to consider reserving £4,000.00 to replace the system. There are currently 7 cameras on an 8 port system. If the WVHC want CCTV inside the building they would need another system. The manual is now available and the CCTV policy can be finalised. It was agreed not to move the electric spur at the moment. It is noted that a Police Officer has requested information but the event took place before the 30 days the current systems stores. It was agreed to look at the CCTV policy but leave the electric spur until after the village hall refurbishment is complete.

Action: Mrs Osborne-Lomax

15. To consider a request for an additional defibrillator in the centre of the village following additional information and take any necessary action.

An offer to have a defibrillator at The Bull (subject to brewery approval) has been received and the landlord is prepared to help fundraise. Cllrs are very happy for this offer and the Clerk was asked to advise the landlord that if they would like to arrange an event councillors would support it. There may be some Locality funding from District Cllrs and some CIL from WPC available.

Action: the Clerk

16. To consider a draft addendum to update Woolpit Neighbourhood Plan and take any necessary action.

The draft addendum produced by the Deputy Clerk showing major changes in the village since the Neighbourhood Plan was approved, has been circulated. It was agreed that the public open space areas need to be marked more clearly. With this

amendment the addendum was approved and can be sent to Paul Bryant, MSDC Neighbourhood Plan Officer.

Action: the Deputy Clerk

Dr Geake left the meeting at 8.30 p.m. and Mr Guyler took the chair.

17. To consider a request to transfer the land that the Village Hall previous extension has been built on to the WVHC and take any necessary action.

When the village hall was extended from the original site there wasn't a change of ownership of the additional land used and WRGC still leases that land from WPC. For the village hall to be extended the Trustees need to get grants for which ownership of the land is a requirement. Back in 2001 WPC agreed to rectify the error and give to WVHC the land that the current hall stands on. The drawing of the area in question received from WVHC appears to be incorrect. Mr Guyler proposed that a meeting be set up with two representatives from both WPC And WVHC to come up with a drawing that all parties agree to. This will then be brought back to WPC for approval. This was agreed and the representative for WPC will be Mr Guyler and Mrs Ewans, Deputy Clerk.

Action: the Clerk.

Dr Geake rejoined the meeting and took the chair at 8.40 p.m.

18. To receive an update regarding the transfer of amenity land from Hopkins Homes to Woolpit Parish Council and take any necessary action.

We are awaiting a response from Hopkins Homes to our questions raised following the site visit with Richard Parmee. Deferred to the next meeting.

19. To consider an offer of a working party for the Millennium Garden and take any necessary action.

A group of ladies has offered to help with maintenance of the Millennium Garden by removing weeds, brambles from the paths and clear litter. Cllrs accepted the offer and Dr Geake will arrange a working party.

Action: Dr. Geake

20. To receive an update on the Elmswell to Woolpit cycle/footpath and take any necessary action.

SCC is planning to hold regular face to face progress meetings. The first is on 23 September and Dr Geake and Mr Hardiman will attend on behalf of WPC.

21. To receive a quarterly report from the Greener Woolpit Project Working Group and take any necessary action.

Due to the hot, dry weather, the only activity has been the removal of Ragwort on a couple of occasions in July. Several members of the group went to visit Walsham-le-Willows, to see their project and to meet other Suffolk groups who are creating their own areas and to swap ideas and information.

It is hoped that we will be able to encourage new members to the group as there has been limited response for volunteers.

22. To discuss traffic issues in the parish

a) to receive an update on solar powered Speed Indicator signs and locations and take any necessary action

There have been no requests to move any of the SIDS. The pole still needs to be replaced in Green Road.

b) to receive an update on 20 mph zone

The Clerk has contact SCC for an update but to date there has been no reply.

23. Completed training details for August 2025. There were none in August.

24. To receive an update on the Bury Road development and take any necessary action.

The issue of weeds from the site affecting Masons Lane residents appears to have been resolved for the time being.

25. To receive a report on the allotments including

a) to consider a rent increase for 2025/6 and take any necessary action.

It was agreed that rents would remain unchanged for 2025/6.

b) the status and administration of the Allotments for the Labouring Poor, Woolpit charity RCN 274133 and take any necessary action.

The Deputy Clerk has found further documentation. WPC is the sole Trustee of the Allotments for the Labouring Poor, Woolpit. There is no copy of the original indenture of 1851 and the Charity Commission do not have a copy either. The Deputy Clerk is happy to visit the records office to see if they have a copy.

With this additional information we can no longer look to close the charity and it needs to be run in the same manner of WRGC. The Clerk was asked to open a new bank account with Unity Trust Bank in the name of Allotments for the Labouring Poor, Woolpit. Once this has been completed the funds held by WPC in the allotment reserve will be paid over to the charity. *Action: the Clerk*

c) report from an inspection

Mrs Hammond has conducted an inspection and most look good considering the weather conditions this year. 2 and a half plots look untidy and the Clerk was asked to contact the tenants and ask if they are having difficulties in maintaining their plots.

26. To receive a report from the Village Hall Committee.

The next meeting will be the AGM on 6 October 2025.

27. Date and time of the next meeting – Tuesday 7 October 2025 at 7.00 p.m.

Noted. It was also noted that the next CIL meeting will be held on Tuesday 16 September at 7.00 p.m.

The meeting closed at 9.14 p.m.

Signed.....

Dated.....