

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL WOOLPIT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY 6 MAY 2025 AT 7.30 P.M. IN WOOLPIT INSTITUTE

Present: Dr Geake, Mrs Osborne-Lomax, Mr Hardiman, Mr Guyler and Mr Foster.

In attendance: County Cllr Mellen (in part), District Cllrs Overett and Mansel, Mrs Fuller Clerk, 9 members of the public.

1.Election of Chair

Dr Geake was nominated, seconded and unanimously agreed.

2. Election of Vice-Chairman.

Mrs Osborne-Lomax was nominated but declined to stand as she feels that as she has only been a councillor for a few months she needed more experience before accepting the role. Mr Guyler was nominated, seconded and unanimously elected.

3. To sign the Declaration of Acceptance forms. These were duly signed.

4. Co-option of Councillors.

Hillary Hammond and Rebecca Tomlinson were unanimously co-opted as members of Woolpit PC and completed Declaration of Acceptance forms. Dr Geake welcomed them both.

5. Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Jenkins.

6. Public comment: Allotment holder concerned regarding the condition of the field and area of the old allotments. They feel it should be planted as a flower meadow with paths. Dr Geake explained about New Woods for Woolpit in conjunction with MSDC Biodiversity Officer rewilding the area which will include this in the future. Resident concerned regarding speeding traffic in Melvin Way/Beaker Close going into and out of the car park. The roads of the development have not yet been adopted by SCC and therefore are under the control of the management company. This could be raised with SCC to see if they can do something before the roads are adopted or the police for dangerous parking. Mr Foster circulated a photo of the new sails with red, white and blue cloth that have been fitted on Drinkstone Post Mill. Mr R Baker was congratulated for getting this achieved ahead of VE80 celebrations. Resident concerned that finally the two larger potholes at Pykotts Way have been repaired but all the rest have been left untouched. Also damage from the use of local roads as rat runs still has not been repaired. A resident expressed their objections to the planning application in Warren Lane and advised of the previous planning history of the site.

7. County & District Councillors' reports.

District Councillors' report: At last month's extraordinary council meeting, the response to the consultation for the council on the Norfolk and Suffolk devolved authority from Mid Suffolk Council was discussed. The response, which included some positive aspects and some negative comments, was unanimously approved. Over £750,000 of the Community Sports Infrastructure Grant has been set aside for new sporting facilities across Mid Suffolk, including either building new or upgrading existing infrastructure. The two current planning applications for advertisement consent at Eurogarage service area A1088/A14 junction, one for the lighting and one for the totems, are to be determined by committee on Wed 7 May. Planning officers have recommended that they are both refused as they do not respect the character of the locality with respect to visual and landscape issues as well as the setting and significance of designated heritage assets. We continue to work on issues regarding the car park off Old Stowmarket Road: signage and EV charging points are on order through SCC, and a second bin by the gate to the Health Centre has been requested. Although the Health Centre requested the gates be opened during recent

vaccination days, they unfortunately did not reply to MSDC's response and so they remained closed, leading to difficulties for patients driving in and out. We hope this situation will be resolved for future requests. Planning enforcement officers are in contact with the landscape management company for the David Wilson Homes development because there have been reports of newly planted trees dying. Hopefully this contact will prevent the loss of further newly planted trees, which are likely to need plenty of water in this recent spell of hot and dry weather. Mid Suffolk District Council are giving away free compost during International Compost Awareness Week (4-10 May) to raise public awareness about the benefits of composting. The most local collection event is at Needham Lake, Sunday 11 May from 8am. Attendees are only allowed a maximum of 2 bags each on a first-come, first-served basis. The next round of locality funding is now live so we are able to accept applications for grants. The total amount per councillor has increased to £10,000. We regularly are available for residents to meet us and discuss local issues. Our next sessions are Tuesday 6 May 10:00 – 12:00 at Green Wolf Café, Woolpit and Tuesday 10 June 10:00 – 12:00 at Wesley Café, Elmswell.

County Councillor's report: On Tuesday 1 April, Cabinet voted to increase the number of school places in the county for children and young people with special education needs and disabilities (SEND), using £18.6m of available capital funding. The plans agreed include opening specialist units within existing mainstream schools, which would create around 100 new places for SEND students for the academic year beginning in September 2025. The second proposal agreed was to allocate up to £12m to create satellite provisions of the existing special schools in Suffolk, with a view that these would open in September 2026 and create another 100 places. The possibility of the council opening its own independent school was also discussed, and may be explored in the future. Since the Cabinet report was tabled, the government has announced that Suffolk will receive an extra £9,441,348 from the Department for Education to invest in new SEND school places. Plans will now be drawn up by the Local Area SEND Partnership on how to spend the money. Cabinet on 1 April also discussed the proposed action plan to improve the Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service, following the Home Office's recent publication of their inspection report which found several areas for action, including improvement to the leadership and culture of the service, and ensuring members of staff felt confident about raising concerns. Cabinet agreed to approve to £1.6m to fund the necessary improvements, and reversed planned IT savings of £0.106m this year to fund the IT improvements needed. Progress on the action plan will be monitored by the Fire Service Steering Group, which is chaired by the Cabinet Member, Steve Wiles. The Action Plan will also be examined by the council's Scrutiny Committee. The next inspection of the fire service is due in 2027. The Department for Education has allocated Suffolk County Council up to £4m to be spent delivering free skills training to an extra 1,345 adults across Norfolk and Suffolk this year. The money will be used to support the council's 'Skills Bootcamps', which help residents gain the specific skills they need to gain well-paid jobs with local employers. Courses last up to 16 weeks and offer a combination of online and in-person learning to suit a variety of schedules, this flexibility makes them ideal for people looking to upskill, change their careers or return to work. The funding also enables local businesses to train new staff or upskill existing employees, with many of the training costs covered. Employers can work directly with training providers to create courses that align with their needs. Suffolk County Council will be installing around 6,000 new public electric vehicle (EV) chargepoints across the county. From the summer, thousands of charging points will be installed on residential streets, with many locations suggested by local residents following the survey which was undertaken last year, or by liaison with communities and district/borough councils. The majority of installations will be bollard-style units at the kerbside, suitable for long-stay or overnight charging, when drivers will be able to benefit from an overnight off-peak tariff, and there will also be a dedicated resident's tariff which features discounted charging at all times. Public car parks will also see a

number of rapid and ultra-rapid chargepoint installations, for quicker charging. This project has been made possible due to a successful £5.3 million bid by SCC to the government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund. This summer's roll-out will use a proportion of this funding, with a further £16 million of funding provided by the chargepoint operator, Believe. 32 Suffolk schools recently attended a conference to help them write their climate action plans and deliver sustainability initiatives. The Suffolk Sustainability in Education conference, held at St Joseph's College in Ipswich, is the first of three events in the East of England to support schools to deliver on the objectives set out in the Department of Education's Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy. The government has said that all schools should have a Sustainability Lead and Climate Action Plan in place by the end of this academic year. The event was co-organised by the Suffolk Sustainable Schools Network, an initiative funded by Suffolk's public sector organisations and delivered by Suffolk County Council, to support the delivery of Suffolk's Climate Emergency Plan. Suffolk County Council has drafted a new strategy to help restore and enhance nature across Suffolk, and has launched a consultation so residents can share their views. The county's Local Nature Recovery Strategy is one of 48 across the country, aimed at addressing the decline in nature and identifying a network of areas to help nature and biodiversity to recover. The plan is for the 48 strategies to create a national 'nature network', proposing actions such as the creation of new habitats, planting of trees and hedgerows, and more sustainable management of existing woodlands and other habitats like grasslands. The consultation on the Suffolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy is open to everyone in Suffolk - residents, landowners, land managers, farmers, businesses and the wider community. There is also the opportunity to view and respond to maps of local areas, where specific measures to help nature could be taken. Both opportunities to provide feedback will close on 11 June 2025,

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

There were none.

9. To appoint Parish Council Representatives to other bodies.

In the absence of Mrs Jenkins, some items have been deferred to the June meeting to allow her to confirm if she wishes to continue in the roles.

- a) Institute Committee - deferred
 - b) Woolpit Village Hall Committee – Mrs Osborne-Lomax.
 - c) Woolpit Charity Lands – Ms Hicks, Mr T Parker and our recent nomination of Hayley Clifton
 - d) St Mary's Church Building Trust – Mr Guyler
 - e) Good Neighbour Scheme - deferred
- Councillors with responsibility for:**
- f) SALC - deferred
 - g) Public Transport Liaison Officer - deferred
 - h) School Liaison – Ms Tomlinson
 - i) Allotment Wardens - deferred
 - j) Responsible Financial Officer - Mrs Fuller, Parish Clerk
 - k) Pump Garden - deferred
 - l) Millennium Garden – Mr Hardiman
 - m) Tree/footpath Warden - deferred

10. To review the effectiveness of council's internal audit and systems of financial control including insurance and risk assessment.

Cllrs reviewed the current internal audit control procedures, insurance and are satisfied that they comply with regulations and are suitable for the PC's financial levels. The Clerk also presented a written Financial Risk Assessment which was unanimously adopted.

11. To approve the minutes of the meeting 1 April 2025.

The minutes were approved and signed.

12. Planning

a) to consider current applications

25/01712 Notification of works to trees in a Conservation Area: T1 Walnut – remove limb overhanging from neighbours; T2 Cyprus – remove to ground level. Danesfield, Drinkstone Road – no comment.

25/01430 Erection of detached garage. Aysgarth, Broomhill Lane – no comment

25/01832 Erection of a self-build dwelling. Land North West side of Warren Lane – Object. The site forms part of a length of open land that runs along this part of Warren Lane in front of a row of flint cottages. This openness contributes to the rural character of the area. There would be detrimental harm to the privacy and amenities of these cottages and the rural character of the area. The design of the building is out of keeping with the surrounding houses, which are flint or rendered; red brick and grey window frames are a fashionable urban design but not appropriate for a rural lane. Councillors also object on highways safety as Warren Lane is a narrow, single-track rural lane with an obscure and dangerous junction onto Heath Road with a lot of traffic already. The access to the proposed development also seems to be inadequate, as it gives onto an existing access which appears to have a splay that is not up to modern standards. The lane is heavily used by walkers, dog walkers and cyclists; it ends in the village allotments and so has more than the usual domestic traffic. Having another dwelling inevitably means more traffic, especially as there is no safe walking route to village amenities (which are all in the centre of the village). The plot is very narrow, which gives us concerns. Firstly, there is little pull-in or turning room within the plot, so visitors will inevitably turn in the road, and deliveries block it. The house comes so close to the hedge on the north-east side that there is no room for effective operation of an air source heat pump (which anyway is not on the drawing). The rural lane is open here and a single house in a narrow plot will stick out like a sore thumb. There is significant opposition from nearby residents, who point out that their houses are lower than the proposed development, with a stream between; there will be run-off down to the stream from the new development and therefore a much higher risk of flooding.

25/01311 Erection of single storey side and rear extension. 16 Mitre Close – no comment.

b) to receive MSDC decisions.

24/05355 Submission of details (Reserved matters appl. 19/03851 appearance, layout and scale of 2 buildings for development composing a mix of B1/B2/B8 uses. Plot 4, land at Lawn Farm, Warren Lane – approved.

24/05369 Erection of a first floor extension and loft conversion with new roof lights. Wyverne, Borley Green – granted.

25/01444 Application for work on a tree in a Conservation Area, reduce crown volume of 1 Lime Tree by approx.. 50%. Danesfield, Drinkstone Road – no objection.

c) to consider a review of Woolpit Neighbourhood Plan in view of the changes to National Planning Policy Framework and take any necessary action.

Due to the changes to the NPPF, Woolpit Neighbourhood Plan needs to be reviewed. This was produced by a committee with Parish Council representation who could be asked to help with this. Mrs Ewans, Deputy Clerk is prepared to start the review by discussing with MSDC NP Officer Paul Bryant.

Action: the Deputy Clerk

District Cllr Mansel stressed that the review would need to include allocations for housing because of the uplift of numbers of new dwellings required.

13. Clerk's Report

SALC AGM 1 July – A place has been booked as there is only one place per council. The Clerk is unable to attend. It was suggested that Mrs Ewans, Deputy Clerk may wish to attend.

Planning webinars – the Clerk has the links to the two webinars purchased. Mrs Osborne-Lomax has watched these and recommends that we purchase the other two webinars so we have the full set. This was agreed.

Action: the Clerk

Old map of Woolpit – This has now been framed and the Institute Committee has agreed it can sit on the wall opposite the door to the Parish Council office.

Village Hall redevelopment – an email has been received from the architects advising they and the Village Hall Committee has decided to develop the design further to take into account comments from the meeting 7 April. The PowerPoint presentation used at the meeting has not yet been received by WPC. Mr Foster will follow this up.

Police pop-up event – this will be 1000-1200 hours Saturday 10 May on the playing field. They hope to engage with people following the recent spate of arson events.

Community Emergency Plan – this was adopted 7 April 2016 and has been reviewed once. There is a push for all villages to have an emergency plan and it was agreed that Woolpit CEP should be reviewed. Mr Hardiman will make contact with Dr West, Mrs Parker and Mrs Storey who produced the original plan.

Action: Mr Hardiman

SCC briefing on Local Government Reorganisation – up to two representatives are invited to attend the event on 6 June 2025 7.30 p.m. in Woolpit Village Hall. Dr Geake and Mr Foster will attend on our behalf with Mrs Osborne-Lomax as reserve.

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

Following the previous response from WPC, a **resident** has again raised concerns that the field beside the allotments is becoming a fire risk due to the state and height of the dead vegetation. Mrs Osborne-Lomax has taken photographs which have been circulated to Cllrs. New Woods for Woolpit are working with MSDC Biodiversity Officer to rewild the area and if we want this to be a wildlife habitat then the area has to be left. The group has a plan and part of the site will be a wildflower meadow but there was an issue with getting seeds this year. WPC receives a quarterly report from the group and it was agreed to wait for the next report in June.

The Contracts Manager from Tarmac has contacted WPC. As they are currently working on ongoing carriageway work on the A14. Tarmac would like to give something back to the local community and have asked WPC to work with them to deliver a meaningful benefit to local residents. Possible ideas were temporary repairs to the village hall car park or the install gateways at start of 30 mph limits in various areas of the parish. The Clerk was asked to contact them to see what they can do.

Action: The Clerk **The following items have been circulated to Cllrs:** SCC LGPS Employer newsletter Spring 2025. MSDC Neighbourhood Plans presentation, NSIP and large scale energy developments update May, Town & Parish update May.

NALC Chief Executive bulletin 3. 10. 17 April, 1 May. **SALC** news bulletin 7, 14, 24, 28 April, 6 May, training bulletin 15, 30 April, 6 May, The importance of appraisals, AGM & 75th Celebration 1 July, The Local Councillor Magazine May, Devolution and Local Government – update and next steps by SALC. **Rural Services Network** Funding Digest April, weekly news 16, 24, 29 April. **Community Action Suffolk** Rural & Community Led Housing webinar 3 June. **Suffolk Constabulary** Police and Crime Commissioner's update April. **Charity Commission** news April. **Proludic** operational inspection of play equipment April. **County Cllr Mellen** copy of presentation for A14 J43-J47 maintenance work. **Resident** problem of drainage Masons Lane passed to County Cllr Mellen. **2 residents** problems of dust from Bury Road development to be taken to the Liaison meeting.

15. Finances

a) To receive a monthly financial report.

As at the end of April there was £43,202.92 in the current account which includes the first half of the precept of £35,000.00. The savings account balance is £599,575.23 to bring the total to £642,778.15. As the Clerk has been working on the year end accounts there is no further report.

b) To approve accounts for payment

A payment of £16.16 to Anglian Water Business (National) for allotment water 5/12/24-4/3/25 was unanimously ratified. Mr M Gardiner £592.20 Highways Ranger April, Mr P Fuller £1434.70 Clerk salary April, Suffolk County Council £408.29 pension payment April, Mr M Hardiman £16.04 reimbursement for VE80 flag at Woolpit Cricket Ground and APM refreshments, Mr M Bailey £9.98 boxes for Woolpit Diary deliverers, MARPA £25.00 annual membership, Proludic Ltd £1279.26 replacement grass matting, Gipping Press £418.00 April/May Diary printing, Mrs J Ewans £94.00 reimbursement for framing old map of Woolpit. Under CIL: Squirrel Builders £3360.00 roof repairs Woolpit Institute. All payments were approved and authorised for payment. Payment by Direct Debit BT £211.51 quarterly bill.

16. To consider succession planning for the position of Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer and take any necessary action.

Mrs Fuller is currently contracted for 20 hours per week. The Deputy Clerk, who is a volunteer, quite often does 10 hours per week. With devolution it is likely that more work will come to parish councils. Mrs Fuller will retire in 3 years, if not before, and succession planning is required. Other villages have struggled to recruit and there is a shortage of good parish council clerks. It is therefore important to get someone trained before Mrs Fuller retires. It was agreed to start the process in September and look at hiring an assistant for initially 10 hours per week with a view to increasing this nearer the current Clerk's retirement and making it a full time post or job share. Funds will need to be included in the budget for 2026/7.

17. To consider commencing meetings at 7.00 p.m. and take any necessary action.

It was agreed to trial this from July.

18. To receive an update on the Elmswell to Woolpit cycle/footpath including consider a response to the consultation on SCC bid to MSDC for CIL funding and take any necessary action.

There is also to be an online meeting to discuss the Elmswell – A14 section on 8 May. This is a requirement as the amount requested from MSDC CIL is £3,498,425.00. Dr Geake and Mrs Ewans will attend. After the meeting a draft response can be circulated for agreement before sending. It is important to get assurances that the Woolpit end of the path will be completed in due course.

19. To receive an update from the Councillor Recruitment and Retention working group and take any necessary action.

The working group met in April and have designed a poster, item for Woolpit Diary, an action plan and a Facebook page for the Parish Council. It is proposed for Mr Guyler and the Clerk to be available at a drop-in session 24 June for anyone interested in becoming a councillor to talk to them and find out more of what it entails or answer any questions they may have. All items approved by council.

20. To receive an update on a VE 80 celebrations including progress of the beacon and take any necessary action.

The new beacon has been installed in the corner of the cricket field and everything is ready for celebrations on Thursday and Saturday. The Co-op are providing some of the bread rolls free of charge and the rest of the food and drink has been organised. A few stewards are required to help on the night. The Cricket Club are cooking the barbeque and have arranged for a pay bar to be available. Chocks Away will be demonstrating dances of the era and the ice-cream company will be there. The numbers booked to attend the dance on Saturday evening in the Village Hall have increased and people can also pay on the door. The event starts at 7.00 p.m. when the band will be teaching people to do the dances and the music will start at 7.45 p.m. Mac & Cheese will be available to purchase from a van outside and there will be a pay bar.

21. To consider an event to commemorate VJ 80 and take any necessary action.

VJ80 is 15 August and we have already arranged for a barbeque and film night. Once VE80 is over there is likely to be information of what is being planned nationally that can be incorporated into the event.

22. To consider installing a Car Park sign at the public car park opposite the church and take any necessary action.

As the car park is leased to MSDC, the Clerk was asked to contact Public Realm and advise that the sign has disappeared and needs replacing but WPC would like to see the design before installation.

Action: The Clerk

23. To consider a response to SALC devolution survey and take any necessary action (ends 25 May)

This will be completed after the meeting.

24. To adopt a CCTV policy and procedure and take any necessary action.

This was drafted by the Deputy Clerk and then passed to the Village Hall Committee for any amendments and approval by the Trustees. Although some amendments have been added there is still further work to be done before either WVH or WPC can adopt the policy. Mrs Osborne-Lomax, along with the Deputy Clerk and the Village Hall Manager will liaise with Mr Gallagher who was previously involved to progress the policy ready for the next meeting.

Action: Mr Osborne-Lomax/Deputy Clerk/ VH Manager

25. To consider staging a Village Organisations Fair and take any necessary action.

This is unlikely to be arranged this summer and the item was deferred for consideration early next year.

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

As Mrs Jenkins has some medical knowledge which would be helpful, this item was deferred to the next meeting.

27. To consider a request to revisit the Footpath Guide published in 1996 and take any necessary action.

The request has come from Woolpit WI and they should be encouraged to do this with a Locality Grant from MSDC.

Action: the Clerk

28. To consider the SCC speed survey results at Borley Green and consider installing Gateway treatment at the start of 30 mph in various areas of the parish.

The data from the speed survey on Wood Road, (just south of the bridge over the A14) doesn't appear to support a change of speed limit down to 30mph. A 40mph may be possible although expensive. County Cllr Mellen therefore suggest that we consider installing a gateway treatment at the start of the 30 mph. Other villages have found that it can be cheaper to find their own licensed contractor rather than going through SCC. It was agreed to explore costs and find out who Badwell Ash used as a contractor.

Action: the Clerk

It was unanimously agreed to continue the meeting for up to half an hour.

29. 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

The pole still needs to be reinstated in Green Road before the SID can be reinstalled.

b)to receive an update on 20 mph zone

SCC is currently carrying out the legal consultation. An item will be in the next Diary to keep residents up to date of progress.

30. Completed training details for April 2025.

It was agreed that Mrs Hammond and Ms Tomlinson would participate in Councillor Basic training as soon as possible. Mrs Osborne-Lomax has completed 2 planning webinars. The Clerk has booked a place on the Cemetery Management course in November.

Action: The Clerk

31. To receive an update on the Bury Road development including transfer of land and take any necessary action.

Mr Guyler and the Deputy Clerk attended the recent liaison meeting and raised the concerns again regarding dust from the site. Tilia confirmed they are dampening roads and soil heaps twice a day and Hopkins Homes are dampening the roads. If problems still persist, residents should contact District Cllrs. On 13 May Mr Guyler, Mrs Osborne-Lomax, The Clerk and Deputy Clerk along with Mr T Parker are walking the area of amenity land between the site and Cricket Club to see if it is in a suitable state for WPC to take over.

32. To receive a report on the allotments including a request for a small shed and take any necessary action.

All the plots are now rented and there are three people on the waiting list. The small 2'x3' shed was approved.

Action: the Clerk

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

Woolpit PC has advised the Village Hall Committee to visit Norton Village Hall and talk to the members of the committee who were involved in the Norton Hall redevelopment plan. Two Cllrs and the Clerk have already done so and found it very interesting and illuminating.

34. Date and time of the next meeting – Tuesday 3 June 2025 at 7.30 p.m. Noted.

The meeting closed at 10.15 p.m.

Signed.....approved.....

Dated.....3 June 2025.....