

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL WOOLPIT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 5 MAY 2026 AT 7.30 P.M. IN WOOLPIT INSTITUTE

Present: Dr Geake, Mrs Osborne-Lomax, Mrs Hammond, Miss Tomlinson, Mr Hardiman, Mr Guyler and Mrs King.

In attendance District Cllrs Overett and Mansel, County Cllr Mellen (in part) and Mrs Fuller Clerk.

1.Election of Chair

Mr Guyler was nominated, seconded and unanimously elected.

2. Election of Vice-Chairman.

Dr Geake was nominated, seconded and unanimously elected.

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

4. Co-option of Councillors. There were none.

5 .Apologies for absence. There were none.

6. Public comment: Mr Hardiman advised that the bus shelter opposite Costcutters has been badly damaged by vandalism and is unlikely to be repairable. Shelter Solutions have been asked to assess and quote for repair or replacement.

Costcutters has been asked to check their CCTV but have no footage. The Clerk will report to the Police. *Action: the Clerk*

Mrs Osborne-Lomax advised that one of the new CCTV cameras at the village hall has also been vandalised. It is hanging down but still working.

Dr Geake advised that the concrete litter bin in the Millennium Garden has been smashed. It was agreed this would not be replaced.

The Clerk will contact our Community Police Officer to log the crimes to build a picture of incidents and ask for increased patrols. *Action: the Clerk*

The abandoned car in The Street which has been acknowledged by MSDC, is causing issues as it is on top of BT connection box. Mr Hardiman will contact MSDC to see if the removal can be expedited. *Action: Mr Hardiman.*

7. County & District Councillors reports.

District Councillors' report: Next Thursday, polls across the county will open from 7am to 10pm for residents to vote in local elections. In Mid Suffolk, residents will be able to vote for their next Suffolk County Councillor. Results will be promoted by Suffolk County Council via their website and social media channels.

The new waste collection service will begin on 1 June. Households will be provided with four collection services as standard: a weekly food waste collection, a three-weekly refuse (general rubbish) collection, a three-weekly paper and card collection and a three-weekly recycling collection for glass, plastics, metal, and cartons. All homes in Mid Suffolk should have now received the new blue bin and the two food waste containers. They will be receiving more information and a new collection calendar during May.

Following a significant fire at the contractors facility the collection service for small electrical items has had to be withdrawn. All the pink WEEE bins across the district have now been temporarily removed, but staff are hoping that a new contractor can be found and the service returns in due course. This is a real shame as this service has been very successful – over 7 tonnes of small electrical items were recycled in Mid Suffolk during the last quarter – saving almost 20 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent.

There have been no full Council meetings during the run-up to the election, but the Annual Council meeting will take place on Thursday 14th May. There will be a further full Council meeting on Wednesday 20th May as there is insufficient time to deal with all the matters alongside the proceedings of the Annual meeting.

Monthly drop-in session - 19 May at the Wesley Café, Elmswell.

Dr Geake asked if MSDC has confirmed that the CIL money for the Elmswell to Woolpit path will still be available as the project is going to take longer than anticipated. The infrastructure team are looking into it but funds for other projects have been held for delayed projects so a precedent has been set.

Cllr Overett asked if there had been any further contact with The Mix for youth projects. Miss Tomlinson advised she has contacted Josh but not received a response. Cllr Overett will contact him to move things forward.

County Councillor's report: The government has announced its five-year Road Investment Strategy for 2026-2031, which includes four key projects in Suffolk: A12 improvements at Woodbridge – a recommitment by the government to funding its share during this period of the £63m scheme to upgrade the A12 between the Seven Hills junction with the A14 and the Woods Lane roundabout, subject to Suffolk County Council submitting the final business case later this year, A140 - A1120 Earl Stonham junction improvements – this has been classed as a scheme 'recommended to continue', where the government accepts work on developing improvements should go ahead during this period. However, the work will be subject to affordability, value for money and deliverability assessments, Improvements to the A11 Fiveways junction near Mildenhall – the government and National Highways will continue to develop this scheme but it will not be delivered before 2031 and Improvements to the A12/A14 Copdock Interchange – the government and National Highways will continue to develop this scheme but it will not be delivered before 2031.

The government has introduced the Ukraine Permission Extension Scheme (UPES) to allow people 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. If the application is successful, Ukrainian guests will be able to continue to live, work and study in the UK and access public funds. Guests must actively apply to extend their visa (it will not happen automatically) when their current permission has 90 days or less remaining, and they must be physically present in the UK while applying and not leave the UK while the application is being processed.

The Suffolk Business Board has appointed Lisa Perkins, Chief People Officer and Director of Growth Partnership at Plexal, as its new Chair for the forthcoming year. Lisa is an existing Board member, and takes over from Mark Pendlington, who is stepping down from a two-year term in the role. The Suffolk Business Board is administered by the council but led by local business representatives to oversee funded programmes supporting business growth and skills development across Suffolk. As Chair, Lisa will work with the rest of the Board and local business partners to promote its ongoing programme of clean and inclusive growth across the local economy. Four other appointments have also been made to the Board, bringing in expertise in agri-food, clean energy, port and logistics and the visitor (tourist) economy.

School pupils from across Suffolk took part in a Dragon's Den style event at Endeavour House to secure active travel funding for their schools. The event, part of the Active Travel Ambassador programme with secondary schools, was delivered by Modeshift. They provided £200 of funding which was matched by Suffolk County Council to provide £400 available for each school, with an additional £50 for the best presentation. Schools can use the money for anything from competition prizes to promotional materials. Projects put forward were from Northgate High School and Ormiston Endeavor Academy both in Ipswich, Claydon High School, Hadleigh High School and King Edward VI School in Bury St Edmunds. Schools that took part in the event last year have all reported an increase in active travel, with more pupils choosing to cycle or walk to and from school.

Suffolk Economy and West Suffolk College are launching the second phase of their Energy Readiness Programme to support employers as they prepare for major developments, including Sizewell C, growing investment in renewable energy, and the emergence of new clean energy technologies. Project partners will include

Suffolk Chamber of Commerce, Suffolk New College and East Coast College. The programme aims to help local people gain the skills needed for well-paid careers and give businesses the confidence to grow, recruit and take advantage of the new opportunities emerging across the energy industry. Employers taking part will be able to access a bursary to help them reduce the costs that can prevent people from undertaking training. There will also be more training options, including new courses shaped by what local employers say they need, extra support for apprenticeships to make it easier for businesses to bring in and train new talent, a focus on innovation to encourage employers to explore new energy solutions and improved monitoring and evaluation to make sure the programme delivers real benefits and adapts as the sector evolves. Phase two will also introduce training designed specifically for work on the Sizewell C site, including courses covering minimum onsite standards and Fit for Sizewell requirements. It will also support skills development across Suffolk's wider energy economy, linking with initiatives such as Freeport East and offering training in emerging technologies.

Cllr Mellen was asked if he could investigate the rumour that SCC is looking into reopening Woolpit ARC.

Cllr Mellen is not standing for re-election to SCC on 7 May and he was heartedly thanked for all he has done for the parish over the last 5 years.

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

There were none.

9. To appoint Parish Council Representatives to other bodies.

a) Institute Committee – Mr Guylor

b) Woolpit Village Hall Committee – deferred. Mr Wheatley will be asked if he will be our representative.

c) Woolpit Charity Lands – Mr Parker, Miss Hicks. Dr Geake was nominated to replace Hayley Clifton.

d) St Mary's Church Building Trust – Mr Guylor

e) Good Neighbour Scheme – Mrs Jenkins

Councillors with responsibility for:

f) SALC – Miss Tomlinson

g) Public Transport Liaison Officer – Mr Hardiman

h) School Liaison – Miss Tomlinson

j) Responsible Financial Officer - Mrs Fuller

k) Pump Garden – Mrs Hammond

l) Millennium Garden – Dr Geake

m) Tree/footpath Warden - Mr Hardiman and Mr Ewans.

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, risk assessment and are satisfied that they comply with regulations and are suitable for the PC's financial levels. The Clerk was asked to change members to councillors on the Financial Risk Assessment.

Action: the Clerk

11. To approve the minutes of the meeting 7 April 2026.

The minutes were approved and signed.

12. Planning

a) to consider current applications

26/01352 Outline Planning Application (access to be considered, all other matters reserved). Erection of a detached self-build dwelling (Plot 1). Noble House, Warren Lane – object. This application is outside the settlement boundary of Woolpit Heath and is contrary to Woolpit Neighbourhood Plan. Therefore, the proposal constitutes development in the countryside and is environmentally unsustainable. Warren Lane is a narrow country lane and there are concerns regarding road safety due to

increased traffic. There is no footway in this area towards the village centre giving rise to road safety issues. The proposal is located in the countryside in a location where the development of new dwellings would not materially enhance or maintain the vitality of the rural community. Future occupants would, moreover, be likely to be reliant upon the private car to access services, facilities and employment. The fact that these are now to be self-build sites in no way outweighs the harm caused, as stated in the Refusal of Planning Consent for the previous application. Contrary to Policies SB1, SB2, H3

26/01349 Outline Planning Application (access to be considered, all other matters reserved). Erection of a detached self-build dwelling (Plot 2). Noble House, Warren Lane – object with the same comment as 26/01352.

b) to receive MSDC decisions.

25/03320 Change of use from agricultural land to equestrian land and the siting of 1 field shelter, land south east of Warren Lane – granted.

26/00595 Discharge of Conditions Application 22/04067 - Condition 15 (Construction Surface Water Management Plan), O C Jewers And Sons Ltd Elmswell Road – reused (part ii and iii of the condition have not been addressed satisfactorily).

26/01538 Discharge of Conditions Application 24/01506 - Part discharge of Condition 11 (Contamination) parts 2 -5 only. Grassy Lane Farm Grassy Lane – acceptable.

13. Clerk's Report

Pothole entrance to car park opposite the church – has been reported to SCC.

Yellow lines outside the school – have been repainted but not the double yellow lines along Heath Road to the Health Centre.

Play inspection course – the only one found so far is through SALC at £136.00. Cllrs decided not to pursue this one.

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

MSDC tree planting opportunities requesting areas for consideration, Cllrs were asked to suggest suitable sites at the next meeting. **Allotment tenant** asking why WPC has not discussed the allotments for the last few meetings. The Clerk will advise that we have formalised the current charitable arrangement by having separate meetings for the allotment charity. **Resident** request for protective measures and traffic enforcement in Masons Lane. Although councillors are sympathetic, this is a matter for SCC but we would support the installation of a metal bollard to protect the property. County Cllr Mellen suggested this email is passed to the new county Cllr after the election. **Potential advertiser** asking for an unpaid item within the main body of the Diary. This request was turned down as it would set a precedent for all advertisers. **The following items have been circulated to Cllrs:** **SALC** training bulletin 7, 14, 25 April and 5 May, news bulletin 14, 20, 25 April, 5 May, Suffolk Highways forums, a roundup of new employment rights (2026-27), SALC AGM 9 July, SALC stand at the Suffolk Show 27/28 May, The Essentials of Absence Management for Councils, Suffolk Community Awards 2026. **NALC** CEO bulletin 9, 16, 23, 30 April. **Rural Services Network** weekly newsletter 9, 15, 29 April. **MSDC** Town & Parish liaison meeting presentations, update on NP funding offer from BMSDC, Town & Parish update May. **Breakthrough Communications** 2026/27 courses.

15. Finances

a) To receive a monthly financial report.

The balance of the current account at the end of April was £45,906.26 (which includes the first half of the precept) and the balance of the savings account was £557,861.36. With £9,891.02 VAT reclaimable, the overall figure is £613,658.64 of which CIL £422,124.52 (£310,723.00 is allocated), earmarked reserves £91,294.54, general reserve £37,000.00 and general funds £63,239.58.

b) To approve accounts for payment

The following payments were authorised for payment Mr M Gardiner £598.53 Highways Ranger April, Mrs P Fuller £1,280.81 Clerk salary April, Suffolk County Council £409.72 pension payment April, Equity pc £65.40 Avast renewal for 2 years, Mr Hardiman £8.50 reimbursement for APM refreshments, NALC £42.00 Planning Reform Unpacked course Mrs Osborne-Lomax, GE Baker UK Ltd £346.80 oak post for village sign and £540.00 steel brackets for swing legs, Proludic £829.72 slide repairs, Glasdon Uk £26.23 spares for dog bins, MARPA £25.00 annual subscription, SALC £822.49 annual subscription. Mr Guyler £3.75 reimbursement for photos of the village sign event. Under CIL Heritage Decoration £5,496.00 wall repairs Woolpit Institute. Payment by Direct Debit BT £204.67 quarterly bill.

16. To consider purchasing cloud storage and password manager for cyber security and take any necessary action.

Mrs Osborne-Lomax had circulated a report from the cyber security training before the meeting. It is recommended that parish council data storage should be backed up onto a cloud storage provider rather than our current method of ensuring data retention is via a plugged in hard-drive. Options through Suffolkcloud, various intermediaries and integration with current IT have been investigated. Mrs Osborne-Lomax suggested that the parish council considers that, as the clerk's laptop is running Windows, a solution would be to use Microsoft's cloud storage (OneDrive). This is advantageous as the backup process can be automated within a system that is familiar to the clerk. It could also be an opportunity to provide a better solution for efficiency by upgrading to Microsoft 365, either for just one user or five users (which would be advantageous in the succession plan for the clerk). This will also provide the most up to date Windows software, without compromising what is already stored on the laptop. Cllrs agreed to purchase Microsoft 365 for five users.

Action: the Clerk.

17. To consider the future of streetlight units 42 And 44 Bury Road and take any necessary action.

These have been turned off but we are still paying an annual maintenance fee. We did consider moving one to a new pole but some residents objected to this. It was agreed that they should be removed and scrapped. The Clerk will get a quote from SCC for the work.

Action: the Clerk

18. To consider a request from Woolpit Village Hall Charity Trustees to Transfer WPC Representation, Membership and Affiliation Rights to Proposed Registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation and take any necessary action.

The CIO format to be used has been specially created by ACRE for village halls and is approved by the Charity Commission. Under Clause 3(3) of the schedule to the Conveyance dated 3 March 1978, which is the governing document of the charity, the parish council along with other village organisations has the right to appoint a trustee to the charity. This right is contained in the new CIO. In fact, the clauses dealing with the appointment of trustees are virtually the same as before. It was proposed, seconded and approved to transfer WPC representation to the CIO.

Action: the Clerk

19. To consider the future distribution management of Woolpit Diary and take any necessary action.

The current managers Mr & Mrs Bailey wish to retire from the role but have advised they will carry on for the June/July issue but hope to be able work with a new distribution manager for the August/September issue. The Clerk was asked to publish an advert in the June/July Diary.

Action: the Clerk

20. To receive an update regarding the transfer of amenity land from Hopkins Homes to Woolpit Parish Council including

a)current position regarding the plan to divert the cyclepath/footpath

The legal position of the proposed street light LP108 needs to be considered before replying to Hopkins Homes as it will be on private land. District Cllr Mansel has advised that the possible extension of the path to Rectory Lane may be eligible for a Mid Suffolk CIL grant. A site meeting will be arranged with MSDC Sustainable Transport Officer to discuss options

b) receive a report from the working group regarding a request that part is leased to Woolpit Cricket Club and Sport Sporting 87 to develop amenity land beside the Cricket Club into high quality football pitches and parking facilities and take any necessary.

Sporting 87 are enquiring from the EFA what is required in a lease for the EFA to fund the pitch. Once that has been ascertained there will be a further meeting of the working group and Woolpit Cricket Club. Sporting 87 have confirmed that they do not require public access, parking or lighting as access will be through the Cricket Club grounds.

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

A stakeholders meeting has been arranged for 12 May.

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

The sign opposite Stoneleigh, The Heath will be turned.

b)to receive an update on 20 mph zone

The 20 mph zone signs have been installed but the 30 mph repeaters have been left in situ. The Clerk was asked to contact SCC to see when these will be removed and if there is a date when the TPO comes into force.

Action: the Clerk.

23. Completed training details for April 2026.

The Clerk attended the Suffolk Highways forum on grass cutting, weed treatment and surface dressing programme.

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

The Clerk has not received an update on the enforcement case.

25. To receive a report from Woolpit Parish Council’s Village Hall Committee representative and Trustee.

Finances remain healthy and the committee has some new trustees. The architect’s plans for the refurbishment of the toilets and entrance hall are nearing completion and it is hoped to go out for tender by the end of 2026 and for the work to commence early 2027.

26. Date and time of the next Parish Council meeting - Tuesday 26 May 2026 at 7.00 p.m. Noted.

Signed.....

Dated.....