

MINUTES OF THE WOOLPIT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY
7 JULY 2026 AT 7.00 P.M. IN WOOLPIT INSTITUTE

Present: Mr Guyler (Chair), Mrs Hammond, Miss Tomlinson, Dr Geake and Mr Hardiman.

In attendance District Cllr Mansel, County Cllr Patchett (in part), Mrs Fuller Clerk and 2 members of the public.

1. Apologies for absence were received from Mrs King.

2. Co-option of a Councillor/Councillors. There were none.

3. Public comment: Resident advised that better advertising of the 20 mph zone is necessary as many drivers are not adhering to the limit.

Mr Hardiman asked that if we do not have someone come forward as the Diary Distribution Manager we should warn residents that the Diary may no longer exist. Miss Tomlinson will talk to someone she thinks may be prepared to take on the role and the advert will be included again in the August/September issue.

A landowner advised of issues they are currently facing with teenagers swimming in a pond on their land. The Police are aware and are visiting the site regularly.

4. County & District Councillors reports.

District Councillors' Report: We have now completed 4 weeks of the new bin collection schedule. It has been challenging for the new crews to get all the bins collected during the heat wave, but last week they collected 162 tonnes of food waste across both districts which was a 6% increase on the previous week. The Waste team are now continuing to improve on delivering the final new bins and food waste caddies, rolling out new bins to communal bins stores and properties, new food collection drivers and loaders productivity and quality, pushing up the food waste daily completion rates (avoiding the need to mop up on roads the following morning) and further reducing the causes which are driving the high volumes of calls and e-mails (mainly missing or missed bins)

Residents, businesses, community groups and stakeholders are being invited to help shape the future of Babergh and Mid Suffolk as the councils launch the first stage of consultation on their new Joint Local Plan. The Consultation opened on 5 June and will run until 31 July.

Hundreds of people gathered in Stowmarket last Saturday to celebrate Suffolk Armed Forces Day. The free event was put on by Mid Suffolk District Council in partnership with Stowmarket Town Council. The day began with a parade, and this was followed by musical performances as well as the opportunity to take part in a variety of family friendly activities. It was a great event and enabled people to celebrate and support all members of our Armed Forces – both currently serving as well as veterans.

A £45M manufacturing facility opens at Gateway 14. Assan Panels opened their first manufacturing facility in the UK. The new facility has the capacity to produce up to 4.5 million square metres of insulated wall and roof panels each year, enough to supply around 450 large warehouses, factories and distribution centres annually.

The official opening was attended by representative from about 250 local businesses and community representatives.

Applications for Mid Suffolk District Council's Pride in Your Place grant have reopened, offering funding to projects that bolster community pride and celebrate the heritage of towns and villages across the district.

The 2026-27 Locality budgets have now been launched so we would love to receive applications for funding from any community group in Woolpit and Elmswell.

Monthly drop-in sessions - Thursday 18 June 10:00 – 12:00 at Green Wolf Café, Thursday 9 July 10:00 – 12:00 at Green Wolf Café and Thursday 13 August 10:00 – 12:00 at Green Wolf Café.

County Councillor's Report: Suffolk is currently scheduled to move from its existing two-tier local government structure (county, district and borough councils) to three new unitary councils, with implementation planned for April 2028 and elections for the new authorities expected in May 2027. SCC has decided to proceed with a legal challenge against the Government's decision regarding the proposed reorganisation. The decision follows an announcement made in May that the council intended to challenge the legal basis of the Government's plans.

The legal action has raised concerns among some councillors regarding potential costs to the public purse and the possible impact on preparations for the planned transition to the new unitary authorities. Supporters of the challenge argue that it is important to test the legal basis of the Government's decision before the reorganisation proceeds.

At Cabinet on Tuesday 16 June, the council considered the proposed Post-16 Travel Policy for the academic year 2026-27. The council is required to publish an annual policy to set out the charges for students over 16, as it receives no funding from the government to provide travel for them – despite it now being a legal requirement for young people to be in education or training until they are 18. The council consulted on the new policy in March 2026, with no changes to charging proposed for the second year in a row. The charges therefore remain: £1,050 for a mainstream seat and £780 for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The 50% discount remains in place for students from low-income families receiving Free School Meals and students with an EHCP or SEND (including those without an EHCP but unable to travel independently due to disability) who also receive Free School Meals. There are currently 30,471 pupils in Suffolk who are eligible for Free School Meals, a 91% increase since 2020. Some post-16 education providers also provide bursaries which can assist families on a low income with travel costs, and cheaper travel may also be possible via public transport in some cases, so parents and carers are recommended to investigate these options too.

Cabinet on Tuesday 16 June also agreed funding of up to £1.35 million for the council to develop a business case for improvements to the A140/A1120 junction in Earl Stonham. The Department for Transport has indicated it would be willing to pay 85% of the project's cost, with the council providing the rest. The council's Cabinet voted to approve the proposal, although opposition councillors pointed out that the ability of the council to fulfil its financial obligations were far from certain, particularly if the works were delayed and the costs increased, as the government's financial contribution would remain at 85% of the cost set out in the business case with the council liable for any extra spend. The proposed works are also close to an ecologically sensitive parcel of land which contains rare orchids. The next step will be for a full business case to come back to Cabinet in mid-2027, with work predicted to start at the site in 2028.

Businesses in Suffolk will now benefit from extra support to recruit and train their workers because of the expansion of the Levy Support Scheme, which will now enable large employers to transfer levy funds to other businesses. Major employers such as East Coast College and Suffolk County Council have already pledged or are planning to pledge unused levy funding so that micro-businesses and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can train up their employees at reduced or no cost to them. The scheme was started by Apprenticeships Norfolk, who oversaw more than £6 million transferred to over 280 businesses.

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service has invested over three million in a new fleet of fire engines across the county. The eleven new fire engines are in addition to the existing fleet and have been bought as part of the service's ongoing fleet renewal programme to make sure fire engines are up to date and reliable. The new engines will be delivered later this year and will be active at fire stations from November. The fire service is also celebrating the first anniversary of its new fire control room, which is based in west Ipswich. The new control system was recently shortlisted in the

International Critical Communications Awards, the leading awards in the sector, in the category 'Best Use of Critical Communications in Public Safety'.

Suffolk Trading Standards has teamed up with Suffolk Constabulary and businesses in the county to launch Suffolk Against Fraud. This means they will work together to investigate, share information and prepare campaigns to raise awareness and protect vulnerable people and small businesses from the effects of fraud, which now accounts for over 40% of criminal offences in Suffolk.

Suffolk County Council welcomed representatives from councils all over the country to its fourth annual conference on Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs), which was held at The Hold in Ipswich on 17 June. There were speakers from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, legal experts and industry organisations. The government was questioned on its plans to reform the NSIP system, as it is currently consulting on reducing the role of councils in the delivery of energy transmission projects. Other topics discussed included how communication by project promoters can improve relations with host communities, what local authority good practice looks like in dealing with NSIPs, and an update from Suffolk County Council and East Suffolk Council on the challenges so far with Sizewell C. Suffolk County Council is recognised as a NSIP Centre of Excellence in the UK, following experience of around 20 large scale projects in the county including offshore wind, solar developments and National Grid reinforcement projects.

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

There were none.

6. To approve the minutes of the meeting 26 May 2026.

The minutes were approved and signed.

7. Planning

a) to consider current applications

26/002537 Application for works to trees in a Conservation Area - T10 - sycamore - clear give way sign by 1.5m. T12 - goat willow - crown lift to 2.5m above ground level over the footpath. T13 - field maple - crown lift to 2.5m above ground level over the footpath. New Rectory, Rectory Lane – comment leave the decision to the judgement of MSDC Tree Officer.

26/02717 Notification of works to Trees in a Conservation Area - Remove lowest limb of 1 Sycamore (T1) and Fell 1 Sycamore (T2) Abbotswell, Rectory Lane – comment leave the decision to the judgement of MSDC Tree Officer.

It was noted that Councillors did not call an additional meeting to consider applications **26/02300** for Approval of Reserved Matters following grant of Outline Permission DC/23/04428 dated 23/11/2023 Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) - Submission of details for Layout, Scale, Appearance and Landscaping, Access points to be considered - Erection of 1 No Single Storey Dwelling - As per accompanying statement, Acorns, The Heath and **26/02198** Application under Section 73 of The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for DC/23/04428 (1 no dwelling outline planning permission) for the variation of Conditions 3 (Approved plans and documents) 4 (Vehicular access) 6 (Biodiversity) 7 (Construction management) and 11 (Dust management) to amend the proposed scheme, Acorns, The Heath as the changes to the plans submitted for the outline planning permission were minimal.

b) to receive MSDC decisions.

There were none.

8. Clerk's Report

Bus shelter – the claim has been registered and we are waiting for Shelter Solutions to assess whether the shelter can be repaired or needs to be replaced.

No Entry markings The Street – have been repainted.

Councillor vacancy – the vacancy created by the resignation of Mrs Osborne-Lomax can now be filled by co-option.

Telephone box – the broken panel has been replaced.

Emergency Plan – MSDC now has an Emergency Plan Support Officer and Mrs Parker has asked for help with the new emergency plan template.

Assistant to the Clerk – the advert was published by Suffolk Jobs Direct on Thursday and will be on SALC vacancies this week. So far there have been 10 applications and 4 enquiries.

East Anglian Recruitment Papers have contacted the Clerk to see if we wish to advertise in their Public Sector special at a cost of £98.20 for the two weeks. Cllrs feel that our current advertising is sufficient.

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

A resident has been trying to identify ownership of a strip of land between their property and neighbouring properties as some tree work is required and asked if WPC has any information. There is nothing in our records and is an area likely to have been overlooked during the land transfer of the neighbouring development. Enquiries undertaken to establish ownership, including HM Land Registry, Neighbouring Title records, Historic Planning records, Mid Suffolk District Council, Local enquiries, the Cadastral plans, and the topographical survey. It is noted that the Mid Suffolk District Council has confirmed that it also holds no information regarding ownership of the land, that the trees are not protected, and that the council do not object to their removal, which MSDC Arboricultural Officer has advised would appear to be the appropriate management option given their location. **A resident** has tried to establish whether the block paved area in Stackfields Close is free for the general public to walk along. SCC has advised that Stackfields Close is not adopted and is therefore a private road and has no public rights for pedestrians. A maintainable footpath link from Spring Drive is proposed for adoption and this provides a link from the development to the start of the footway alongside Green Road. **A resident** with a complaint to the work carried out by Openreach in Meadowlands. Councillors comment that whilst a trench had been made in the pavements the finish is smooth and not a trip hazard. **A resident** concerned with the aesthetics of the village, condition of Rags Lane, lack of grass cutting, overgrown hedges and faded white lines. The Clerk was advised to respond that WPC website allows residents to report faults and issues to SCC Highways. *Action: the Clerk.* **A resident** regarding the condition of the area for rewilding in Warren Lane. The Clerk will advise that the contractor was unable to carry out harrowing and seeding in the spring due to the lack of rain and will be carried out in the autumn. The contractor will be asked to cut the area again, *Action: the Clerk.* **A resident** advising that someone not connected to WPC was looking at allotment plots. The Clerk will advise that we had to deal with a wasps nest and taps had to be replaced. *Action: the Clerk.* **An allotment holder** has reported rats at the allotments. Mrs Hammond as Allotment Warden will investigate and advise. **MSDC Town & Parish Liaison meeting** – New Local Plan system 10 July, nobody able to attend. Mr Guyler and Dr Geake wish to attend the Parish Liaison meeting on 29 July in Elmswell. **The following items have been circulated to Cllrs:** SALC unauthorised encampment guidance notes, news bulletin 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 June, training bulletin 2, 23, 30 June, Code of Conduct factsheet – dispensations, AGM 9 July, Suffolk Community Award – don't miss out on the chance to nominate, managing health and long term illness and risk. NALC: CEO bulletin 28 May, 4, 18, 25 June, 2 July, help shape the future of the sector survey, Star council awards 2026/27 nominations now open. **MSDC Armed Forces Day Stowmarket** 27 June, Better Recycling from 1 June update, Town & Parish update June & July, NSIPs large scale developments June & July, Town & Parish Liaison meeting 29 July, Suffolk celebration of cycling and family fun day 12 July. **Rural Services Network** newsletter 28 May, 3, 10, 17, 24 June, 1 July, **MAID** petition on housing, **SCC** Suffolk Trading Standards stamp out rogue traders campaign. **Charity**

Commission updated guidance, spotting scams and annual returns. **Suffolk Police** PCC update July.

Mr Guyler advised that there has been a video of the centre of the village on Nextdoor thanking WPC, Woolpit Nurseries and all volunteers watering the plants in the pots which makes such a wonderful display. The post received 10 positive comments and 144 likes. WPC congratulated all involved.

10. Finance

a) To receive a monthly report from the Clerk.

The balance of the current account at the end of June was £41,718.09 and the balance of the savings account was £560,573.48 including £2,712.12 interest. With £1,811.01 VAT reclaimable, the overall figure is £604,102.58 of which CIL £417,544.52 (£302,755.68 is allocated), earmarked reserves £90,153.11, general reserve £37,000.00 and general funds £59,404.95.

b) To approve accounts for payment.

The following payments were authorised for payment: Mr M Gardiner £618.70 Highways Ranger June, Mrs P Fuller £1,318.93 Clerk salary June, Suffolk County Council £409.72 June pension Payment, HM Revenue & Customs £1,975.53 PAYE April-June, SALC £86.40 allotment training Dr Geake 23 & 24 June, Mid Suffolk DC £66.00 brown bin annual subscription, Woolpit Institute £112.00 meeting room hire April-June, Woolpit Institute £520.00 office rent April-June, Proludic £2,142.00 annual contract 2025/26, Woolpit Nurseries £100.00 filling pots pump garden, Mr M Hardiman £27.43 reimbursement for sealant for play area, Mrs P Fuller £118.80 expenses April-June and under CIL Woolpit Village Hall £2,109.00 architects' fee, planning fee, drains and asbestos surveys.

11. To consider quotes to fell diseased cherry tree on the playing field and take any necessary action.

Two quotes have been received and a further quote will be sought before discussing further at the August meeting. *Action: the Clerk*

12. To consider quotes for the replacement of the gate to Lady's Well and take any necessary action.

We have tried to obtain 3 quotes but have been unable to get these as it is a small job. A quote has been received from JGH Garden Services for repair of the gate including new post and new hinges but using existing gate £270.00 or repair of gate including new post, new hinges and bolt and a new gate £408.00. Cllrs agreed to the quote of £408.00 including a new gate. *Action: the Clerk*

13, To consider replacing the damaged CCTV camera at the village hall overlooking the Millennium Garden area and take any necessary action.

A quote has been received from Flagship AV for £506.50 including VAT. Dr Geake asked why there was only one quote. This is because Flagship installed the whole system and this camera needs to match the system. It was unanimously agreed to replace the camera at a cost of £506.50 including VAT. *Action: the Clerk*

14. 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.

Drawings of the land are being sent to Mr Guyler who will arrange a meeting with the Village Hall Trustees. If any other Cllrs wish to be included in the discussions they were asked to contact Mr Guyler.

15. 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

Hopkins Homes has been advised of our agreement to the diversion of the cyclepath/footpath.

The Clerk has visited the landscaped area by the new roundabout which Hopkins Homes want WPC to take as part of the amenity land. There are 200 shrubs and 4 trees that have not taken or have died. The Clerk will write to Hopkins Homes and advise WPC is not prepared to take on this area until the shrubs and plants have been replaced and are thriving.

Action: the Clerk

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

We are still awaiting an update from WCC Sporting 87.

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

The preliminary design has been completed. During May 2026 through to Spring 2027, the focus has shifted to developing the proposals in detail, including the production of construction drawings and specifications.

17. 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

All the SiDs are working. The SiD from The Heath will be moved to the pole in Church Street to support the 20 mph zone.

b) to receive an update on 20 mph zone

SCC still needs to remove the two 30 mph repeaters in the 20 mph zone. The zone is now in force as of 3 June.

18. Completed training details for June 2026.

Dr Geake allotment training 23 & 24 June.

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

The hedge along Bury Road is overhanging the pavement. The Clerk will contact Hopkins Homes for them to get it cut.

Action: the Clerk

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

We currently do not have a representative and therefore no report. Cllrs were reminded of the necessity to make this appointment and it doesn't have to be a councillor.

21. Date and time of the next Parish Council meeting - Tuesday 4 August 2026 at 7.00 p.m. Noted.

The meeting closed to the public at 8.59 p.m.

In camera

22. To consider Information from SCC regarding the Elmswell/Woolpit path/cycleway not yet in the public domain and take any necessary action.

WPC comment that all of Rectory Lane to WCC gate needs to be 20 mph as it is SCC Highways land.

Action: the Clerk

The meeting closed at 9.04 p.m.

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

Dated.....4 August 2026.....