

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

Present: Mr Guyler (Chair), Dr Geake, Mr Hardiman, and Mrs King.

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

Mrs Osborne-Lomax has resigned from the Parish Council. She had been a member of the council for 18 months and was involved in many roles including being the Parish Council representative on the Village Hall Committee. Mrs Osborne-Lomax was elected as Chair of the Village Hall Committee at the AGM in March and has decided to concentrate on that role, particularly with the upcoming refurbishment project. She will be greatly missed on the parish council and we thank her for all her hard work.

1. Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Hammond and Miss Tomlinson.

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

3. Public comment complaints regarding potholes were made to County Cllr Patchett.

There are continuous issues with dog fouling.

A landowner is considering using a field as a secure dog run and is looking into what issues could arise before making a decision.

4. County & District Councillors reports.

County Councillor Patchett was congratulated on his election.

District Councillors' report: Following the recent County Council elections we now have a Reform administration at SCC. The Green party are the second largest party and form the official opposition. The new Green party County Councillor for Elmswell and Woolpit is Cllr James Patchett.

Every household across the district should have received correspondence from the Suffolk Waste Partnership explaining how to use the new bins. The letter included a detailed bin collection calendar for each area. From 1 June the new blue bin will be collected – and we can now recycle tetrapaks, polythene bags as well as plastic bottles and cans and glass bottles and jars in the blue bin. The food waste bin will be collected every week.

A new website has very recently gone live, called Future Suffolk. This has been jointly created by Suffolk's county, district and borough councils and provides clear information and updates about LGR in Suffolk and includes an interactive map of provisional ward boundaries, timeline, and details about the 2027 shadow authority elections. This is a temporary website that aims to communicate the changes ahead in a clear and transparent way. It provides a single point of contact for residents to submit questions and comments via completion of the Contact Us form.

All the districts and boroughs have now agreed to form voluntary joint committees who will work together preparing for the new unitary authorities. The new Reform County Council is fighting the Government decision to go ahead with the reorganisation via Judicial Review, but officers continue working towards LGR until we hear otherwise.

Both Babergh and Mid Suffolk have approved the formal notice to commence preparation of a new joint local plan. This will be published before the end of May and will include a timetable, and the statutory Scoping Consultation will commence in June 2026 and run for a period of 8 weeks.

Jen met with Josh, Open Access Project Lead at The Mix 15 May to review the February half-term event at the village hall, and to plan possible weekly outdoor sessions specifically with Woolpit young people over the summer holidays. The goal will be to start building relationships with this group and to find out what kind of local

activities they would like. If the parish council agrees this is the best way forward, then we will be open to providing some funding via our Locality budget.

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.

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

There were none.

6. To approve the minutes of the meeting 5 May 2026.

The minutes were approved and signed.

7. Planning

a) to consider current applications

26/01798 Erection of 8 dwellings. Loke Farm, Wood Road – object. The site is outside the settlement boundary. The site is unsuitable for housing as residents' amenity will be severely affected by proximity to A14 from which there is both noise and pollution. To achieve the noise abatement suggested, residents will not be able to open their windows. The noise will also mean that the gardens cannot be enjoyed in the usual way. Any development will increase traffic on Wood Road and Warren Lane. The exit from the site is on a corner, close to the bridge and directly on to a de-restricted (60 mph) road. There is no pedestrian access to the site along the roads and no public transport close by.

26/01912 Outline application (access to be considered, all other matters reserved) Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) erection of 5 self-build dwellings, land north of Heath Road – object. The site is outside the settlement boundary, so constitutes arterial development in the countryside. Not only that, it does not conform to policies in the Woolpit Neighbourhood Plan. It does not conform to WPT1, which says that development will be supported if it is well related to the existing pattern of development. However, it isn't well related and in fact, it is within the Settlement Gap between Woolpit and Woolpit Heath. It also does not conform to WPT11, which says development will only be permitted in the Settlement Gap identified on the Policies Map, where it safeguards the integrity of the gap. This proposed development does not safeguard the integrity of the gap

b) to receive MSDC decisions.

26/01958 Discharge of conditions application 22/04067 – Condition 15 (construction surface water management plan) O C Jewers, Elmswell Road – acceptable.

26/0111 Conversion of stable block into annexe (already semi-converted). The Cottage, Sharpes Row – granted with occupational restriction as accommodation incidental and ancillary to the principal dwelling.

8. Clerk's Report

Bus shelter vandalism - we now have a crime number which has been reported to the insurance company for the claim.

Ragwort, Field in Warren Lane – Greener Woolpit group will look to see what action is necessary.

Cherry tree in playing field – is in a poor state and needs to be felled. Quotes are being sought.

Footpath 4 – there was a tree blocking the path which was dealt with very swiftly by the landowner.

Pothole at the entrance to the car park opposite the church – SCC has confirmed the work has been ordered.

Stowmarket Striders Friday Five road race – will be at 7.30 p.m. 26 June. The Clerk has asked them to get information to us earlier next year so it can be included in Woolpit Diary.

Allotment training – there is a two day course 23 & 24 June. This is as the Clerk returns from holiday so is unable to attend. Dr Geake will check to see if she is available.

Damage and anti-social behaviour Melvin Way play area – This has been reported to the Police and the Clerk has advised them that WPC does not own or maintain the area.

Abandoned vehicle, The Street – has been removed.

SALC win a storytelling chair – the Clerk has nominated Woolpit Primary School.

Onehouse-Woolpit Quiet Way – Mr Guyler attended the meeting to bring PCs up to date prior to the workshops 9 & 10 June when they hope to receive local people's feedback.

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

The following items have been circulated to Cllrs: SALC NSIPs bulletin May, news bulletin 7, 11, 18 May, training bulletin 12, 19 May, Suffolk Highways event - budget priorities 12 May and self-help scheme 15 June, SALC Super Forum - from Announcement to Action: Where We Are Now and What Comes Next - 2nd June, Suffolk Community Awards nominations now open, mental health awareness week – take action, LGR Implementation Board email, preparing for NSIP Statutory consultation, AGM 9 July, embracing neurodiversity in the council workplace, visit SALC at Suffolk Show stand 195. **NALC** Chief Executive bulletin 7, 14, 21 May.

MARPA East West Rail: a mainline railway - Consultation now open.

Suffolkonboard new timetable. **Phonely** information on landline switch off 2027.

Walk, Wheel, Cycle Trust Onehouse-Woolpit Quiet way – next stage co-design events 9 & 10 June. **Suffolk LGR Implementation Board** preview of LGR website Future Suffolk. **Proludic** inspection report 11 May.

10. Finance

a) To receive a monthly report from the Clerk.

The balance of the current account at the end of May was £44,677.00 (which includes 2025/6 VAT refund £9,341.73 and wayleave payment £117.70) and the balance of the savings account was £557,861.36. With £1,811.01 VAT reclaimable, the overall figure is £604,349.37 of which CIL £417,544.52 (£306,143.00 is allocated), earmarked reserves £90,153.11, general reserve £37,000.00 and general funds £59,651.74.

b) To approve accounts for payment.

The following payments were authorised for payment: Mr M Gardiner £591.80 Highways Ranger May, Mrs P Fuller £1,148.27 Clerk salary May, Suffolk County Council £409.72 May pension Payment, Mr R Raisey £137.10 edit June/July Diary, Gipping Press £446.00 printing June/July Diary, Tania Jones £210.00 internal audit of accounts 2025/56. Payment by Direct Debit E-on Next £55.07 pump light quarterly bill.

11. To complete and sign the Statement of Assurance and Annual Return for year ended 31 March 2026.

The Clerk advised that the internal audit is complete and no issues had been identified to raise with Cllrs. The forms were duly completed and signed by the Chairman and Clerk. The dates for the publication of public rights were agreed as 25 June – 5 August.

Action: the Clerk

12. 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

It was agreed that WPC accept the deviation shown on drawing 2108-605-SK028B and ask that, for safety reasons, a section of fencing is included where the stays are immediately adjacent to the cycleway.

Regarding the proposed street light LP108 near to the Tennis Club which WPC assumes will be owned by Suffolk County Council in due course, The Clerk will ask

Hopkins Homes if they have discussed with SCC their acceptance of a light on private property and how will LP108 receive its electricity supply. We need to know if it requires a cable across the proposed bridge by the Tennis Club.

Mr Guyler and Mr Hardiman attended a site meeting with Katherine Davies, Sustainable Travel Manager, MSDC and District Cllrs Mansel and Overett to discuss the section of path which will be on WRGC land. It was agreed that the path should curve round to join the highway at Rectory Lane. Mr Guyler advised that as WPC is the Trustee of the WRGC which owns the car park, there are unlikely to be any issues with using the land for this. Katherine Davies will ask Stuart from Pell Frischmann to visit the site and draw up the concept design. This will be accurate enough for costing for a CIL bid and sufficient for a Bill of Quantities. Katherine will also speak to Christine Thurlow MSDC Infrastructure regarding the potential for CIL funding – as an off-road cycleway scheme that adjoins an adopted highway, this is likely to be seen as appropriate for bidding - and explore SCC adopting the path once it's built – there's a reasonable likelihood given that it will be joining an adopted highway. She will speak to Hopkins Homes about them building it based on MSDC design, funded by MSDC, and ask them for a price.

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.

There is nothing to report; awaiting Sporting 87 to arrange a meeting following their enquiries with EFA.

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

A stakeholders meeting was held on 12 May. SCC project manager advised that the design of the route is complete and are looking at a mid-2027 start time for construction. The design work includes the Woolpit section and seems to be an all in one project rather than separate for Elmswell and Woolpit. The project will look to extend 20mph for the full length of Rectory Lane and the path will join further along Rectory Lane where it is safer. The path is likely to be slightly narrower over the A14 and the fencing on the A14 bridge will be raised by 0.5m. There is no update on the CIL funding.

14. To discuss future storage of items currently stored in the village hall shed and take any necessary action.

Mr G Baker has agreed to store the plywood staging for events and the ropes and posts to mark off the parking area of the playing field can be stored at Woolpit Institute. The salt for the salt bin will be disposed of. The Clerk will contact our insurance to see if owner or operator is liable for accidents on the village hall car park and check our insurance covers this if necessary.

Action: the Clerk

15. To consider youth projects and take any necessary action.

District Cllr Overett has met with The Mix and the February event was reasonably successful. The Mix have got a worker who goes into Thurston School who could survey for attendance and then The Mix would apply for Locality Funding to put on a further event in the summer holidays. WPC was happy for The Mix to proceed with this.

16. To consider a response to MSDC consultation on provision of outdoor sports facilities and take any necessary action.

Mr Guyler and the Clerk were tasked with completing this.

Action: Mr Guyler /the Clerk

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.

Nothing to update.

b) to receive an update on 20 mph zone

SCC has confirmed they will remove the 30 mph repeaters in the 20 mph zone. The Order comes into force 3 June.

18. Completed training details for May 2026.

There were none.

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

MSDC has confirmed that Tilia Homes are building to the approved plans.

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

There is no report for this meeting.

21. Date and time of the next Parish Council meeting - Tuesday 7 July 2026 at 7.00 p.m. Noted.

The meeting closed at 8.55 p.m.

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

Dated.....7 July 2026.....