

Wickham Market Parish Council – Clerk's Report 15 September 2025

1. **Wickham Market News:** Deadline for the November issue is 10 October 2025. Delivery begins 10 November
2. **Governance:** There are two reviews to formally agree (Agenda item FC25:65)
 - 2.1. Clarification regarding time available for public speaking. Standing Orders 3g provides 3 minutes but Public participation policy only allows 2 minutes per person. WMPC need to choose which is appropriate and I will make the changes immediately and coordinate the agenda headings
 - 2.2. Clarification regarding written public reports. As agendas are required to be published at least 3 clear days before the meeting (which is effectively 5 working days), written statements from the public should be accepted 2 working days before the meeting to allow for them to be circulated to councillors for consideration.
3. **CCLA:** Since the finance report was produced, we have received a further £213.59 investment income. That is £1,540 since our initial investment in February. This primarily represents the reserves that the council is required to keep to satisfy best practice for audit.
4. **Reports for the council meeting:**
 - 4.1. Written reports were requested for this council meeting to be published in advance for all residents to see. Reports not received in time and therefore not published or added to the agenda include:
 - 4.1.1. Emergency Plan
 - 4.1.2. General Cemetery
5. **Correspondance:** A resident has suggested that my report should contain a summary of correspondence from residents. I completely agree, so this will be a regular feature going forward. I do not name the correspondees to protect their identities.
 - 5.1. One Church Terrace resident regarding cut branches on Pightle. Item FC25:85 refers.
 - 5.2. Another Church Terrace resident regarding footpath clearance around No10. Legal issue to be investigated
 - 5.3. One resident regarding the unnoticed anomaly with public participation at meetings. FC25:84 refers.
 - 5.4. One resident regarding the footpath 029 between high St and Churchill Crescent. Responded
 - 5.5. One resident regarding vehicle parked on the pavement. Responded
 - 5.6. One resident regarding the poor state of the play area. Responded and remedial action taken see item 5 below.
6. **Children's play area**
 - 6.1. I am aware that the play area is not in a good state of repair although third party inspections do not report it as unsafe. We are trying to find a company to carry out repairs on the equipment.
 - 6.2. There will then be a proposal to lay durable all weather surfacing around each piece of equipment while maintaining grass in between items.
 - 6.3. Proposals and costs will be brought to the Council for approval before work commences.
7. **Code of Conduct Complaints**
 - 7.1. It is disappointing that there have been three Councillor Code of Conduct complaints brought against our unpaid volunteer councillors this summer.
 - 7.2. The Councillors responded in detail to each one, refuting the allegations. The East Suffolk Monitoring Officer and an independent reviewer came to the conclusion that there was no breach of the Code of Conduct in every case and that there is no further action to be taken.
 - 7.3. These complaints do however highlight some procedural improvements that the council could consider. The council is continually reviewing processes and governance and will always consider suggestions from residents if they are within the legal framework that we are required to follow. Indeed, over the last few years there has been a huge improvement in transparency and information on Council activities published.
8. **Freedom of Information requests.**
 - 8.1. While Wickham Market Parish Council is not subject to any legal requirements for transparency, I believe we publish more information regarding our activities and finances than any other council of our size.
 - 8.2. During the Summer we received some Freedom of Information requests. Some requested information that we are not required to publish by Law, but in the interests of transparency, I have added it to my publication regime.
 - 8.3. Some, however, are deemed currently confidential pending the outcome of a grant awarding panel based on advice from Suffolk Association of Local councils [SALC].
9. **New Website**
 - 9.1. The new visitwickhammarket.co.uk website has been delayed for another week or so because of teething problems with another town council website delivery. It is expected to go live during September.
10. **Allotment charges**
 - 10.1. Allotment charge notifications have been sent out with payment due by 1 October
11. **Suffolk Animal Rescue Fun Day**
 - 11.1. WMPC were pleased to support this community event through promotion in the news magazine and social media. Also by providing some WMPC gazebos on the day. We received a very nice thank you email for our support.