

WICKHAM MARKET PARISH COUNCIL

CHAIR: Cllr IVOR FRENCH

MINUTES of the Meeting of Wickham Market Parish Council held on
Monday 21 September 2026 at 19:00



FC26-103 Present from Wickham Market Parish Council (WMPC).

Councillors I French, Chenery, Creasey, Day, Dempsey-Gray, S French, Horsnell, with A Besly (Clerk) and Councillor Noble (East Suffolk Council [ESC])

FC26-104 Present from the Public. 5

FC26-105 Open Public Forum session. Members of the public are invited to speak on matters on the agenda.

One member of the public said that the agenda items should have a sponsor. *This is noted. The revised, more accessible version of the agendas in 2026 have inadvertently omitted the sponsor so it will be rectified going forward.*

They also complained about item 117 in that the report was anonymous, there is no consultation and is therefore not transparent. *The need for repair or upgrade to the play area was identified over six years ago during the previous Clerk's tenure. A reserve of £23k was created to support this project. However, there has been no committee or councillor with the capacity to drive this forward. Following several complaints from the public, the Clerk agreed to take this forward and for transparency, has been reporting initial progress in Clerk's reports since June 2026. The report in question provides the Council with the key information (reasons, potential cost, suggested design and potential funding) for the Council to approve in principle for the project to continue. Consultation on the design is clearly highlighted in Para 6: The Way Forward. Final Council approval will be sought before any work is committed.*

Another member of the public raised a number of queries:

- Questions on the Simons Cross development. This member of the public has submitted an objection. *Iain Jamie from Beaulay Homes is here this evening to discuss developments on the planning of the Simons Cross Development.*

- There are a number of ideas on a variety of things, predominantly environmentally based, but as there is no environment and leisure working group they do not know how to bring these ideas to the full council.

Operational reports are requested for every second Full Parish Council meeting. This was agreed by the Full Council in January 2026 item FC25:159. Item 4.3 of this proposal states "Other reports such as markets, allotments, cemetery, tree work, environmental reports are also reviewed every second month alternating with finance reports." This was reiterated in the clerks reports of both February and March 2026. These operational reports can contain updates and suggestions for the future. Any firm recommendations need to be submitted in the form of a proposal on the face of the agenda for the full council to debate. There is a one-page guide published on the Parish Council website under Parish Council documentation, councillor induction which also contains references to legislation and best practice. Guide No 6: Meeting reports and motions.

- A suggestion to get the youth involved in tree planting.
- In July 2022 the Parish Council organised a volunteers' meeting in the village hall. There was a request to have another similar event before the village hall closed.
- Expressed concern over Suffolk County Council revoking the climate emergency.

Item 112 promoted to this point in the meeting to allow Councillor Noble to attend another meeting:

East Suffolk Councillor's Report. (ESC). *Published.* Councillor Noble added the following comments.

- Local government reorganisation is on hold and has affected East Suffolk Council's plans and is very confusing.
- Elections will continue in May 2027.
- Councillor Noble has just had a tour of Sizewell C mitigations sites.
- Domestic waste bin collections have improved. It is recognised that food waste still needs improvement and a new vehicle has been purchased and a driver employed. Recycling has increased from 44% to 56% since June 26. The target is 60%. Domestic bin collections should be running effectively by the beginning of October 2026.
- Councillor Noble noted under biodiversity that Suffolk Wildlife Trust is due to write a report with recommendations for the cemetery. She felt that the people involved with the cemetery should be present at the meeting.

Councillor Chenery made the following comments:

- Ruby Hunter from the joint emergency plan group has met representatives from the George and the British Legion to assess them as rest centres.
- Councillor Chenery will attend the emergency plan webinar on the 1st of October 2026.
- He highlighted that the last bus to Wickham Market is at 18:55 so young people are not able to use public transport to go out for the evening. He requested that a later bus is considered.
- He noted that recent news offers concern about youth issues and it is estimated that one in four have some issues.
- An idea of a youth event was floated for the half term holiday. It was suggested that the Parish Council could provide some funding for this event however an organiser would need to be found.

Councillor Noble left the meeting at 19:22

FC26-106 Briefing from Beauly Homes regarding planning revision for the Simon's Cross Development.

Iain Jamie from Beauly Homes talked about the latest developments:

- There is no change to the layout of the scheme on the planning portal the plan is still the same.
- There has been a discussion with ESC regarding affordable housing. Plots 1 to 6 and plots 10 and 11 were identified as affordable housing. This means that they would be sold to a social housing provider for affordable rents. However there have been no providers with sufficient economic interest in these plots.
- The ESC Planning Officer has engaged Quintec, (who provide independent services for ESC) to assess the need for affordable housing. This independent report says that it is not viable for affordable housing on this site. Beauly Homes is therefore looking to agree with ESC Planning to remove the affordable homes status from these plots. However, these housing units will still be built as per the submitted a plan and these lower cost houses will be offered on the general housing market.

There were a number of questions which Ian has responded to.

- Has a revised planning application been submitted.
A new planning application is not needed because this is a section 106 approval.
- Section 106 suggests that the developer could be a provider of affordable homes will Beauly Homes do this.
There is significant legislation to become a registered provider of affordable housing. This is not viable for Beauly Homes to do this for 8 units.
- What price will these units be offered for.
The price will be pitched at market value which is expected to be between £150k to £200k for a one bedroom 550 square foot dwelling.
- There was a request for an update on the highways situation.
Beauly Homes have provided appropriate drawings to highways showing the visibility splay. The 30mph speed limit extension will need to be in place by the 1st occupation on the development. If Sizewell C have not already extended the speed limit, then Beauly Homes will do this.

At this point the Chair closed the meeting to allow questions from members of the public.

- Will the 30mph speed limit be in force before construction begins.
No, the 30mph speed limit cannot be put in force for this development until the 1st occupation. However, the access road will be built first to allow easy ingress and egress for delivery vehicles.
- There was concern over plans to remove hedging.
Iain Jamie has offered to walk the site with members of the public to discuss the hedging.
- Are there options to change the style of affordable housing.
There are no plans to change the style of the homes that have already been reviewed through planning.
- What are Suffolk County Council's proposals to improve the bridleway (Little Lane).
Beauly Homes are giving circa £15k to Suffolk County Council to upgrade the bridleway. Beauly Homes has no influence on how this upgrade will take place.

The Chair reopened the meeting.

Three members of the public left at 19:50

FC26-107 Proposal to authorise Apologies for Absence for Councillors Jenkinson and Cooke. **All agreed.**

FC26-108 Councillor's declarations of Interest in items on the agenda. None.

FC26-109 Proposal to approve the draft minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 20 July 2026 and Extra Ordinary meeting on 3 August 2026. **All agreed.**

FC26-110 Receive minutes from Committees and Working Groups. All noted with no questions.

1. Finance and General Purpose Committee 7 September
2. Village Hall Modernisation Working Group 7 July 2026.
3. Planning Committee 21 July, 23 July and 14 September 2026

FC26-111 Suffolk County Councillor's Report. (SCC). None received.

FC26-112 East Suffolk Councillor's Report. (ESC). This item was promoted to run before item 106.

FC26-113 Chair's Report. *Published*. The following questions and comments were noted.

- Is there any progress with the youth group.
Ivor is still looking into restarting a youth group.
- The Parish Council could offer a grant for a youth event.
- The Hill is much quieter now that Morrisons has closed. Does the post office serve alcohol.
- It was noted that rubbish was being thrown over the hedge into the Bowling Green.
- Is the crime data from the police service available in more detail.

FC26-114 Clerk's Report. *Published*. There were thanks for a detailed report but no questions

FC26-115 Deputy Clerk's Report. *Published*. There were no questions.

FC26-116 Finance Reporting September 2026 reviewed and approved by the Finance and General Purpose Committee.

1. Finance Report. *Published*. There were no questions.
2. Bank Reconciliation. *Published*. There were no questions.
3. Summary Financial Statement. *Published*. There were no questions.

FC26-117 Proposal to move ahead with a plan to modernise the children's play area. *Published*.

Conscious that there has been criticism of this report, the Clerk outlined the work supporting it. While the Clerk accepted that the report should have been dated and signed, the need for repair or upgrade to the play area was identified over six years ago during the previous Clerk's tenure. A reserve of £23k was created to support this project. However, there has been no committee or councillor with the capacity to drive this forward. Following several complaints from the public, the Clerk agreed to take this forward and for transparency, has been reporting initial progress in Clerk's reports since June 2026. The report in question provides the Council with the key information (reasons, potential cost, suggested design and potential funding) for the Council to approve in principle for the project to continue. Consultation on the design is clearly highlighted in Para 6: The Way Forward. The intention is to carry out consultation during an event that attracts families. The Christmas Market is an ideal forum for this. Final Council approval will be sought before any work is committed.

The proposal was reviewed and approved. **All Agreed.**

FC26-118 Proposal to reallocate reserves and budget to support funding of the Children's play area. *Published*.

This proposal seeks to maximise grant match funding by demonstrating that the Council has over £43k of funds earmarked for this project. The Clerk confirmed that there was still £3k available for tree safety inspections and £2k for subsequent safety work. Councillors reviewed the proposed schedule of funding sources and agreed the reserves and budget transfers as presented. **All Agreed.**

FC26-119 Proposal to review and approve the External Audit Report. *Published*. **All Agreed.**

One member of the public left at 20:23

FC26-120 Village Hall Modernisation Report. *Published*.

1. Proposal to approve works orders, invoices and payments associated with modernisation. The order and payment for Stroma Building Control Ltd for £1,500 was approved. **All Agreed.**
2. Proposal to agree for WMPC to issue tender documents for Village Hall Modernisation prepared by our contracted architects. *Circulated*.
Councillor Horsnell described how the tender process works and confirmed that he had reviewed and queried elements on the documents that the architect had prepared and was satisfied that they were suitable. It was noted that WMPC had engaged the architect to carry out this process as it was recognised that the Council did not have these skills in house. The proposal was approved. **All Agreed.** Councillor Horsnell was thanked for all his hard work and dedication to this project.

FC26-121 Planning: Proposal to vote on the proposed planning amendment for Simons Cross Development.

Following the detailed discussion with Iain Jamie from Beaulieu Homes, it was proposed that WMPC support the amendment to allow the affordable homes to be changed to private units which would be smaller units to be available as lower cost homes on the open market. **All Agreed.**

FC26-122 Proposal to update the Cemetery Regulations to allow for an Exclusive right of burial of cremated remains in the memorial garden. *Published*. **All Agreed.**

FC26-123 Proposal to purchase and install a seat for the Simons Cross playing field agreed in principle at FC26-87 Examples Circulated.

It was noted that a notice was displayed at the proposed site between 11 and 30 August to allow for objections from neighbours. None were received. There is now a notice on site stating WMPC intention to instal a seat at this location.

It was proposed that ESSL be asked to quote and install a Glasdon seat similar to others around the village. **All Agreed.** Once the quotes have been received, the Clerk will complete the application to Councillor Noble's Enabling Communities Budget as she has agreed to fund the seat and installation.

FC26-124 Consider how best to manage Christmas trees and decorations on the Hill.

It was suggested that WMPC pay a contractor to do this work. The Clerk reported that Neil Fenton has agreed to quote for this work. He is the reliable person that sets up our seasonal markets. **Councillor Horsnell** will write a description of what needs to be done for Mr Fenton to provide a quote.

Councillor Chenery will investigate new battery powered lighting for the small trees.

FC26-125 Consider request from Pam Holden to extend 30mph speed limit along Chapel Lane. *Circulated.*

Councillor Chenery described the process for the extension of the 30mph speed limit along Chapel Lane:

- This is a SCC highways decision for implementation.
- It will require WMPC to obtain SCC Councillor Stephen Molyneux's support.
- WMPC confirmed that they support this speed limit extension in principle so **Councillor Chenery** will write to SCC and Pam Holdon to get the process moving.

At this point the meeting had run for 2 hours. It was proposed that standing order 3) x. be suspended to allow further business to be transacted. **All Agreed**

FC26-126 Proposal to appoint Pauline Huggins to the Emergency Plan Working Group. One objection, all others agreed. **Carried.**

FC26-127 Proposal to consider the implications of SCC revoking the Climate Emergency.

WMPC Climate Working Group commented on the agenda item regarding Suffolk County Council revoking the climate emergency declaration. We would like it recorded that as a group, we strongly disagree with the revocation. It does not reflect the science. We are also aware that similar schemes are likely to continue under a different name, so to a large extent, this is semantics.

FC26-128 Proposal to accept the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) salary award and continue to pay employees at the new salary, backdated to 1 April 2026 based on their previously agreed pay point. **All Agreed.**

FC26-129 Reporting items for the next meeting. None

FC26-130 Date of next meeting: Monday 19 October 2026

Meeting Closed 21:14

Signed.

Cllr Ivor French, Chair.

Date.

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