

WICKHAM MARKET PARISH COUNCIL

CHAIR: Cllr IVOR FRENCH

MINUTES of the Meeting of Wickham Market Parish Council held on
Monday 20 April 2026 at 19:00



FC25:223 Present from the WMPC Councillors:

Council:	I French (Chair)	Day	Councillor Noble (ESC)
	Cooke	S French	A Besly (Clerk)
	Creasey	Horsnell	

FC25:224 Present from the Public: 1

FC25:225 Open Public Forum session. None

FC25:226 Proposal to authorise Apologies for Absence from Councillors Chenery and Jenkinson. **All Agreed**

FC25:227 Declarations of Interest in items on the agenda: None

FC25:228 Proposal to approve the draft minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 16 March 2026. **All Agreed.**

FC25:229 Receive Committee and Working Group Minutes

- 1 Planning Committee 25 March and 8 April 2026.
- 2 Climate Change Working Group 18 March and 25 March 2026.

FC25:230 Suffolk County Councillor's Report (SCC): None received due to May elections

FC25:231 East Suffolk Councillor's Report (ESC): In addition to her published report, Councillor Noble noted the following:

- Concern raised with her regarding tankers going through the village. **The Chair** confirmed that this is because of elevated phosphate levels in the final effluent from the treatment works. To avoid this effluent from being discharged and having an environmental impact, the decision was made to tanker all final effluent away from the site. Levels are now back to normal and tankers have now stopped.
- Two cones left at the high street road repair are causing an obstruction. The Clerk will collect on Wednesday.
- There will be three unitary councils following local government reorganisation. More information to follow.
- The Community Partnership forum went well.
- Grants available include Thriving Places and Councillor Noble's Locality budget.

FC25:232 Chair's Report. There were no questions

FC25:233 Clerk's Report. There were no questions

FC25:234 Finance Reporting Proposal to approve Year End 2025-26 documents

- 1 Finance Report and Payments Schedule. Approved. **All Agreed.**
- 2 Summary Financial Statement. Approved. **All Agreed.**
- 3 Year End Payments report. Approved. **All Agreed.**

FC25:235 Proposal to approve Annual Governance Returns.

- 1 Annual Governance Statement AGAR s1. Approved. **All Agreed.**
- 2 Annual Accounting Statement AGAR s2. Approved. **All Agreed.**
- 3 Bank Reconciliation. Approved. **All Agreed.**
- 4 Variance explanations. Approved. **All Agreed.**
- 5 Exercise of public rights dates. Approved. **All Agreed.**

FC25:236 Proposal to authorise CCLA Reinvestment on receipt of Precept. The explanation in the Finance Report was discussed and it was proposed that £40k should be reinvested in CCLA upon receipt of the first precept payment. **All Agreed.**

FC25:237 Changing Places – Do the council want to pursue this opportunity? Not everyone felt that this was good use of Councillor or Clerk resources. However, Councillor Creasey offered to find out more so that the Council could make an informed decision. The Clerk will forward the relevant email to Councillor Creasey.

FC25:238 Footpaths Report. There were no questions and the Chair thanked Simon, our volunteer Footpaths Warden, for an informative report and his continued work. Simon was also thanked for clearing the weeds around the village hall which makes it look much tidier.

FC25:239 Cemetery Working Party, Green Gym and Tree Warden Report. Anne, our volunteer Tree Warden, was thanked for her informative report. There were, however, some elements that were not clear:

Regarding the Cemetery Working party:

- The first recommendation referred to WMPC clarifying membership. However, members of the Cemetery Working Party are not appointed by the Council, they are a group of volunteers who are coordinated by Anne Westover (not led by a Councillor). Regular volunteers should sign the WMPC volunteer agreement to be sure of being covered by the Council insurance.
- If this recommendation refers to membership of the Climate Action group, then this is not within the Cemetery Working Party remit.
- The second recommendation refers to advice from the Suffolk Wildlife Trust whose contacts were passed to the E&L working Group, but nothing was done about it.
- Independent Tree Safety reports were instigated by the Clerk because there had been no tree safety recommendations from the E&L for over three years. The resulting report was criticised because it used a different numbering system. It now transpires that there is no current tree numbering system for the majority of WMPC tree stock. In the absence of someone to move this forward, the Clerk will organise when time allows.

Cemetery Working Party (green Gym)

- It is not clear what the difference is from the Cemetery Working Party above as there is no appointed Cemetery Group. This was an informative report however there were a couple of statements that were challenged:
- “Trees positioned with care around burial rows.” This is not the case and some trees interfere with future burial rows shortening the active life of the cemetery by and estimated 1 – 2 years. All future tree planting must be approved by the Clerk who is responsible for the Cemetery and its operations.
- “ESSL operatives have recently confirmed that no bulb drifts create any cause for concern in terms of grass cutting operations.” The operatives will of course spend extra time avoiding bulbs but this increases costs. The whole point regarding bulb positioning seems to have been completely missed.

Tree Warden activities

- The recommendation for a wider landscape enhancement plan can be brought to the Council in due course as an outline proposal for the Council to consider.

Councillor Sue French has agreed to be the lead Councillor to liaise with the Cemetery Working Party.

FC25:240 Allotments Report. There was a question regarding CCTV. The clerk confirmed that the Allotment Association were organising this and that the Parish Council have agreed to cover reasonable costs. Currently awaiting a plan.

FC25:241 Village Hall Modernisation Report. This is a clear and informative report and there were no questions. There was however a discussion regarding the future Chair of the VH Modernisation Committee who must be a councillor.

FC25:242 Reporting items for the next meeting. None noted.

FC25:243 Date of next meeting Monday 18 May, Annual Parish Council meeting

Meeting Closed at 20:47

Signed.

Cllr Ivor French, Chair.

Date.

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