

WRENTHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Wrentham Parish Council held at The Village Hall on Monday 16th February 2026 at 7:30pm

Present: **The Chairman** – Cllr Ian Watson
Councillors – Cllr Steve Billington, Cllr Mark Buxton, Cllr Sue Child, Cllr Alison Evans, Cllr David Fletcher, Cllr Simon Forder, Cllr Gerda Gibbs, Cllr Sarah Hancock, Cllr Roger Middleditch, Cllr Paul Wren.
The Clerk – Mrs Frances Bullard (via video conference)
Suffolk County Council – Cllr Annette Dunning
East Suffolk Council – Cllr Paul Ashton
Members of Public – Two.

1	OPEN FORUM	
	Fiona Anderson, Chair of the Village Hall Committee, spoke re plans to hold an event to mark the 40 th Anniversary of the Village Hall. This will take place on 28 th June 2026 & will be open to all. There will be representatives from all groups who use the village hall. The Chairman suggested the VHMC link with Lucinda, Rosie & Lindsay, who have previously run very successful events, for advice. The VHMC would like financial support for the event from the PC. The Chairman thanked Fiona for her input and said Councillors would discuss this request in the main meeting.	
2	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
	Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Lucinda Hutson.	
3	PECUNIARY AND OTHER INTERESTS	
	All as Sole Trustee of Village Hall. Item 5.9 – Cllr Simon Forder & Cllr Gerda Gibbs.	
4	TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PC MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 19th JANUARY 2026	
	The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 19 th January 2026, having previously been circulated, were proposed as a true record by Cllr Middleditch & seconded by Cllr Forder - All in favour – The Chairman will sign a copy.	IW
5	MATTERS ARISING	
5.1	Maintenance Work at Wrentham Old Cemetery – This is on hold until early Spring. Cllr Ashton will progress a working party.	
5.2	Bonsey Gardens Play Park Refurbishment – Cllr Hancock gave an update re the Official opening event which took place on Saturday 24 th January 2026 – all went very well and local children attended and cut the ribbon to officially open the park. The Chairman thanked Cllr Ashton for his support & Cllr Hancock for co-ordinating the event. Additional signage to the playpark is awaited and Cllr Ashton will chase. Cllr Gibbs advised the path to the play area is very muddy – Cllr Ashton will look into what can be done about this.	PA
5.3	Benacre & Kessingland Flood Management Project – The Chairman has requested updated posters. It was noted that lorries are leaving a lot of mud on the roads – wheel washers should be in place – Cllr Ashton will raise this.	PA
5.4	Jubilee Park – Waste Bins/Play Area – The Chairman has spoken with Cripps Developments – there is one waste bin in the play area which is currently fenced off and will not be opened until the final property is sold and a Management Company takes over responsibility – it is anticipated this will be in July/August. Concern was expressed that the play area is designed for very young children but there is no fence around it – especially given that it is very close to a busy road. Cripps applied for a dog waste bin to be installed but this was declined by ESC –	

	The Chairman proposed that the PC apply for a dog waste bin near the entrance to the development, seconded by Cllr Child, All in favour – The Clerk will progress. Cllr Ashton offered to check planning conditions re the provision of the play area and waste bins.	FB PA
5.5	Additional Dog Waste Bins – Chapel Road end of footpath to The Lane, verge opposite Horse & Groom PH, Chapel Road near to Village Pound – The Clerk has submitted the request to ESC and awaits a decision. Cllr Wren said a bin is required near to the village stores as a lot of rubbish seems to be accumulating there. The Clerk will write to the shop to see if they can address this, either by providing a bin or with signage asking people not to litter.	FB
5.6	Sizewell C Park & Ride Service Parking – Cllr Hancock has shared the response from SZC to her email. SZC have highlighted on their timetables that there is to be no parking of personal cars at the Village Hall etc. Any concerns about this or lorries associated with SZC should be reported direct to SZC via info@sizewellC.com – The Clerk will add this link to the PC website.	FB
5.7	Potential Creation of Reservoir at Wrentham West End by Essex & Suffolk Water – nothing further has been heard re this – residents of Wrentham West End are aware of test drilling of bore holes.	
5.8	Update re St Nicholas Church Tower & Bells – Cllr Child advised lots of work has been undertaken by experts to get the bells renovated & tested – the test run was problematic as a drone identified cracks in the tower – further investigation by a Structural Engineer is required. Currently there is no access to the tower and the bell project is on hold. Cllr Evans advised grants are being explored to progress any required work.	
5.9	Quotation from Keith Hall for additional deer fencing at the allotments – a quote has been received for £3130.10 (inc VAT) – this is to clear ground & replace the existing fence on the Southwold Road side of the allotments. The Chairman spoke re the difficulty in getting 3 quotations – he has discussed the quote with Cllr Hutson as she has significant experience of fencing quotes & it was felt this is a reasonable amount for the work involved. Both Cllr Fletcher & Cllr Middleditch recommend the services of Keith Hall. Cllr Buxton proposed the quotation be accepted and work goes ahead, seconded by The Chairman, All in favour (Cllr Forder abstained due to a declared interest). Cllr Forder will make contact with Keith Hall to progress – The Chairman asked that the work be done asap as the letting of one plot is currently on hold pending the work being completed.	SF
5.10	Any other Matters Arising – None.	
6	REPORT FROM CLLR ANNETTE DUNNING (SCC)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Dunning has sent a written report which The Clerk will share with all. • Cllr Dunning advised that it has now been confirmed that elections will go ahead on 7th May 2026. • New Electoral Boundaries will bring changes to the Halesworth Division and this will no longer cover Wrentham. • CEO Nicola Beach has resigned and her role will not be filled pending the move to a Unitary Council. • Cllr Dunning spoke re flooding at a field entrance on Southwold Road – this has been raised with Highways who are exploring the legality of this entrance and will progress the matter. • Signage to Footpath No 7 has now been reinstated. 	FB

7	REPORT FROM CLLR PAUL ASHTON (ESC)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Ashton spoke re ongoing cable projects – Sea Link & Lion Link – these will have no direct impact on Wrentham. • ESC Budget is being taken to Full Council next week for approval – the budget is very tight – despite some additional funding from Government ESC have the second biggest reduction in funding across the Country. • LGR decision expected in March 2026 – it will then be all hands to the pump to make it work. • County Council Elections in May 2026 – Councillors will be in post until 31.03.2028 when Unitary Councils will come into being. Mayoral Election will take place in May 2028. • Potters Bridge – Natural England funded a second temporary outfall on the Benacre side of the marshes – this is working well but is not a permanent solution. The road surface at Potters Bridge is in poor condition. Cllr Dunning advised SCC have amended the diversion route to Blythburgh. ESC are exploring options to find a more sustainable route for the future – potentially a large number of houses could be built to fund this which could mean an additional primary school is justified. • Cllr Ashton has spoken with Cllr Bevan re a Community Bus Service from Southwold to Darsham/Halesworth – also a service from Southwold Town Centre to the Harbour – there is likely to be a pilot scheme in the summer of on demand buses with flexible routes. • Recycling – letters will go to all households re new bins – there are over 100,000 bins to be delivered. • Cllr Wren asked about signage for High St layby – Cllr Ashton has this on his 'to do list'. 	
8	UPDATES RE HIGHWAYS MATTERS INC SID/VAS SIGNS	
8.1	<p>VAS –</p> <p>Site Assessment – Northern end of High Street – Application has been approved by VAS Team – pole will be installed by end of March.</p> <p>VAS on the Southern A12 is experiencing issues purely due to the lack of sunlight in December & January.</p> <p>Cllr Buxton has double checked that the new Westcotec sign will be compatible with ANPR & the order has been placed – delivery in 2-3 weeks.</p>	
8.2	<p>Any other Highways Matters –</p> <p>None.</p>	
9	FLOODING MATTERS	
9.1	No issues at present – The Wren is flowing well. To be removed from Agenda & issues will be raised when they occur.	
10	PLANNING	
10.1	Any further Planning Applications/Matters –	
	None.	
11	FINANCE	
11.1	Balances at Bank – The Clerk advised bank balances total £112,758.46. £55,096 of this is ringfenced CIL monies of which £17,500 is ringfenced for the Village Sign & VAS. The Clerk confirmed SAGE balances with Bank Statements & this has been verified by The Chairman & Cllr Hutson.	
11.2	Clerk's salary & Expenses of £139.56 (Mileage, SAGE & Microsoft 365 renewal)	
11.3	Quarterly HMRC payment (Jan, April, July, October) – Nil	
11.4	Invoice from Suffolk.Cloud – Website Hosting - £120.00	
11.5	Invoice from Mrs Sally Walker for Village Website Hosting - £71.40	

11.6	Invoice from SALC – Code of Conduct Training - £79.20	
11.7	Any other accounts received – None.	
	Above payments 11.2 to 11.6 were proposed by Cllr Hancock, seconded by Cllr Fletcher, All in favour. The Clerk has raised online payments & these will now be approved.	IW
11.8	To agree appointment of Internal Auditor – The Clerk will approach Mrs Rosie Carter to see if she is willing to undertake the internal audit.	FB
11.9	To agree Allotment rents for 2026/27 – Following discussion it was agreed to leave the rent unchanged (£40 for full plot & £20 for half plot). The Clerk will send letter to all allotment holders.	FB
	The request from the VHMC for financial support for an event to mark the 40 th anniversary of the Village Hall was discussed. It was felt the event will be good for the whole community as there are very few opportunities for residents to all come together. Cllr Buxton proposed a donation of up to £2500, seconded by Cllr Evans, All in favour. The Chairman will update Fiona Anderson.	
12	REVIEW OF PARISH COUNCIL POLICIES/STANDING ORDERS	
12.1	Work is ongoing to draft policies in support of Standing Orders/Financial Regulations. The Clerk has shared updated Policies for IT & Equal Opportunities with The Chairman & Vice Chairman – once reviewed these will be shared with all and added to the next agenda for adoption.	FB
13	CORRESPONDENCE	
13.1	Email from Cllr Wren re Footpath No 7 signage – signage has now been reinstated.	
13.2	Email from ESC re new Article 4 Direction in Wrentham Conservation Area Consultation – Cllr Ashton gave an overview – The Clerk has circulated the email to all.	
13.3	Email re Village Hall 40th Birthday celebrations – covered in Open Forum and Finance.	
13.4	Email from Avison Young re proposed telecoms work – The Clerk has asked when outages are planned. Cllr Hutson, as landowner, will be advised when work will take place.	
13.5	Email from Suffolk Parishes Road Safety Group – The Clerk has shared with Cllr Buxton.	
13.6 13.6.1	Any Further Correspondence – Email from Cllr Ashton re SCC Revised 20mph Speed Limit Policy – to be added to next agenda for discussion.	FB
14	ANY OTHER BUSINESS/MATTERS FOR NEXT MONTHS AGENDA	
14.1	The Chairman reminded all of the Village Litter Pick taking place on Saturday 21 st February 2026 – starting at 9:30am from the Village Hall – All Welcome.	
15	DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Monday 16th March 2026 – 7:30pm.	
15.1	To agree a date for the Annual Parish Meeting – it was agreed this would be held at 6:30pm on 20 th April 2026 prior to the PC Meeting. The Clerk will progress.	FB

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9:20pm