

**Wetheringsett cum Brockford Parish Council**  
**Minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held Monday 12 May 2025, 7.30pm at the Village Hall,**  
**Wetheringsett.**

**Present:** Cllrs D Howard (Chairman), T Alston, S Alderton, B Lacey, Mrs R Leech, N Lingard, Mrs J Weir and Mrs K van Zyl. County & District Cllr A Stringer and two members of the public

**1. Election of Chairman**

Cllr Alston proposed the re-election of Cllr Howard for the role of Chairman, seconded Cllr Alderton and unanimously agreed. Cllr Howard accepted the nomination and thanked the Council for its support.

- 2. Apologies and Consent to absence** were received from Cllrs Mrs E Aldred and Mrs L Drury.  
County and District Cllr Stringer would be arriving late due to another meeting.

**3. Declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda**

Item 15 – Cllr Alderton.

**4. Election of Vice Chairman**

The Chair proposed the re-election of Cllr Lingard for the role of Vice Chairman, seconded Cllr Alderton and unanimously agreed. Cllr Lingard accepted the nomination and thanked the Council for its support.

**5. Reports**

1. Police available online at <http://suffolk.police.uk> – no queries were raised.
2. County Councillor – Cllr Stringer's written report had been circulated (copy attached to the Minutes).
3. District Councillor – Cllr Stringer's written report had been circulated (copy attached to the Minutes).
4. Footpaths - no report.
5. Trees – the dead elm on Church Street had been removed by Suffolk CC Highways.

**6. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

A parishioner interested in joining the Council was in attendance to observe the meeting.

**6. To consider for approval Minutes of the meeting held 7 April 2025**

Cllr Alston proposed acceptance of the Minutes, seconded Cllr Lingard – unanimously agreed.

**7. Matters arising from the Minutes for report – none.**

*7.30pm Cllr Mrs van Zyl arrived.*

**8. To confirm current and/or changes to Parish Councillor Representatives/Working Groups:**

1. Finance – all councillors
2. Public Rights of Way – Cllr Mrs E Aldred
3. Trees – Cllr Mrs E Aldred
4. Village Hall – Cllr Lingard
5. Play Area – Cllr B Lacey and S Alderton
6. Emergency Planning – Cllr Mrs K van Zyl
7. Neighbourhood Plan – Cllr N Lingard
8. Appointment of RFO and Internal Auditor – Clerk and SALC
9. Planning – all councillors
10. Speed Signs – Cllrs Mrs J Weir, B Lacey and S Alderton

Cllr Alston proposed adoption of the above on block, seconded Cllr Mrs van Zyl – unanimously agreed.

**9. Planning Applications for recommendation to MSDC**

1. DC/25/01878: Land at Hockey Hill, Wetheringsett – application for Outline Planning Permission (access point to be considered, details for appearance, layout, landscaping and scale reserved).  
Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended – erection of 5 dwellings) (self custom-build) (with access)  
A recommendation of refusal was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed on the following grounds:
  - The proposed site was outside the settlement boundary - CS2 and did not form part of the Wetheringsett cum Brockford adopted Neighbourhood Plan
  - The proposed site was not included in the MSDC draft Local Plan for proposed new development sites
  - Surface water drainage on Hockey Hill continued to accumulate during rainfall at the bottom of Hockey Hill (cemetery entrance area) and had been the subject of the recent Suffolk CC s.19 flood report following severe flooding of lower Hockey Hill/church street during Storm Babet.

- The proposed site was not sustainable - health centres, public transport, shops could not be accessed by foot all would need to be accessed by car
- The site was on the edge of the conservation area
- The proposal would impact on the two neighbouring listed properties - HB1
- Parish Council members had raised serious concerns over access and visibility to the proposed site as follows:

A single track to facilitate vehicles accessing the site with banks either side

The detrimental impact on both close adjoining properties (Raedwald and 7 Hockey Hill) either side of the track - H16

The narrow entrance to the track from Hockey Hill constrained by housing either side

The narrow entrance and track cannot not accommodate waste collection and emergency vehicles

Vehicles accessing the proposed site would add to the existing congestion on Hockey Hill, particularly during school drop off/pick up times when vehicles are parked nose/tail on Hockey Hill reducing the road to single track and loss of visibility due to vehicles parked both sides of the access point.

The dwellings immediately to the south of the proposed access did not have drives/garaging and park their vehicles on Hockey Hill both sides of the access point, thereby reducing visibility and width of the road.

Sites within Wetheringsett had been refused permission on grounds of poor and dangerous highway access

The proposal would destroy wildlife habitat - bats and owls occupy the site.

2. DC/25/02067: The Old Forge, Church Street – application for Listed Building Consent to replace two modern existing internal doors - replace with doors in keeping with the majority of the other internal doors. A recommendation of support was proposed, seconded and agreed.

#### 10. Planning Decisions received from MSDC

1. DC/25/00812: Sunhaven, Park Green - Discharge of Conditions Application for DC/24/04248 - Condition 4 (Biodiversity Enhancement Measures) and Condition 5 (Landscaping Scheme). Approved with Conditions
2. DC/25/00107: Northlea, Wetherup Street - Construction of an outbuilding to be used for hair dressing. Planning Permission Granted with Conditions
3. DC/25/00946: Willow Cottage, Pitman's Corner - Householder application - Erection of single storey rear extension (following removal of existing conservatory). Re-roofing existing dining room with peg tiles from pan tiles. Planning Permission Granted

#### 11. Planning correspondence

Members noted the government requirement to increase the number of dwellings in Mid Suffolk in the Planning Policy section of Cllr Stringer's District Council report. The increase was from the previous 535 dwellings per year up to 734. The district council wanted to ensure all parishes were aware of the effect of this. An indicative calculation had been made and indicated an additional 100 dwellings for Wetheringsett over the coming 20 year period. These numbers were indicative only at this stage. The briefing session also covered the importance of Neighbourhood Plans and the support available to Parishes in developing one.

#### 12. Wetheringsett Flood s.19 report

1. Report from Suffolk CC Flood Team  
The S19 6-month review would be published in May and would have progress on recommendations outlined in the report. The majority of progress would be seen within the short-term recommendations, in line with anticipated timescales. Medium term recommendations were not expected to be completed yet and were likely to be ongoing.

Full details from associated RMAs would be included in the update but for now the following update from Suffolk Highways:

Short Term Action – SCC Highways to carry out repairs to drainage feature on Church Street in Wetheringsett.

- This work is now complete.
- In addition to this, highways took the opportunity of the road closure/TM to try to resolve the watercourse downstream. Due to limited time for the road space, part of this work is outstanding. This is not directly part of the section 19 response.

Medium term Action - SCC Highways to include watercourse adjacent to A140, (200m north of bridge, west side of carriageway) in routine maintenance schedule and investigate if outfall pipe is present/operational.

- This recommendation is ongoing.
- A site visit had been undertaken with Milestone (March) and the works to clear the watercourse was with the operations team. Being the A140, TM on this road is more challenging.
- Date to be confirmed.

A full update on remaining recommendations would be provided in May.

The Parish Council's Emergency Plan was complete and in the process of being distributed to parishioners via the Parish Magazine.

2. Report on Wetherup Street remedial work

Cllr Lacey reported the ditches needed clearance, these were the adjoining landowner responsibility. The Parish Council owned the pond and any root system into it would need to be removed. Action regarding ditch clearance deferred to next meeting.

13. **Wetheringsett Emergency Plan** – report on distribution of plan to parishioners

Cllr Mrs van Zyl reported the Emergency Plan would be distributed to parishioners with the June Parish Magazine.

14. **Wetheringsett Village Hall**

1. Management Committee report – Minutes of the last Management Committee had been circulated. No queries were raised.

2. Report on School Licence Agreement and Diocesan Lease – No further action to report.

3. As Custodian Trustee - Parish Council to consider payment of electricity invoice May – Nov 2024 following reading errors, solar installation and changed providers

Subject to approval from SALC, Cllr Mrs van Zyl proposed, seconded Mrs Weir and unanimously agreed, that the council processed the payment.

4. Village Hall Summer Solstice event 22 June 2025 – to consider Parish Council contribution of £250  
Cllr Alston proposed a contribution of £250, seconded Cllr Mrs Leech – unanimously agreed.

15. **To confirm Cemetery and Play Area Grasscutting arrangements and cost 2025**

Cllr Alderton had declared an interest at item 3 above and reported a known grasscutting contractor based in Ipswich would be willing to make six grass cuts at both the play area and cemetery during the forthcoming season at a cost of £1200. For the cemetery only six grass cuts at £950.

The Chair understood the Manor School had agreed to take over the play area cuts, he would confirm this with the school. In the meantime Cllr Mrs van Zyl proposed acceptance of the quote of £950 for cutting the cemetery only, seconded Cllr Mrs Leech, 7 in favour, 1 abstention, proposal carried.

Details of the contractor, together with confirmation of public liability insurance, to be forwarded to the clerk.

16. **Play Area report**

1. Installation of new re-cycled plastic bench and picnic table – complete.

2. Report on grant assistance to fund play equipment improvements – no progress to report at present.

17. **Speed Camera report**

1. Speed Camera data circulated – it was noted vehicles were still speeding regardless of the signs. The data was being forwarded to Suffolk Police. It was hoped the signs would continue to be a deterrent.

2. Permanent VAS equipment at southern Brockford Street and Hockey Hill

Cllr Mrs Weir reported the permanent speed sign for Hockey Hill had been approved on 14 April 2025.

The purchase of posts by the Parish Council for both Hockey Hill and southern end of Brockford Street had been approved and ordered, delivery and installation would take approximately 14 weeks.

Cllr Mrs Weir reported an application from Cllr Stringer's locality budget would be made for a contribution towards the signs. The Chair to continue to pursue purchase/contribution from the Manor School.

18. **Proposed new Parish Council/Community Website report** – deferred.

19. **Report on Community Litter Pick – Saturday 26 April 2025**

Councillors reported on a successful and good effort by councillors and parishioners, a large area of the village had been covered and fly tipping of trade items reported to MSDC.

20. **Finance**

1. To consider s.137 donation requests

Requests had been received from Brave Futures (formerly Fresh Start) and St Elizabeth Hospice. These were not supported at the present time.

2. Accounts for payments

Clerk – sal-expen April 2025 £350.44

Cllr Mrs Leech proposed payment of the above, seconded Cllr Alston – agreed.

3. To consider for approval Wetheringsett cum Brockford Parish Council Year end accounts 31.3.25  
The year end accounts had been circulated prior to the meeting. These showed a carry forward balance at 31.3.25 of £13,408.58. No queries were raised. Cllr Mrs Weir proposed acceptance of the accounts, seconded Cllr Lingard – unanimously agreed.
4. Annual Audit 2024/25 - to consider for approval Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) Sections 1 and 2  
The Council's income and expenditure 2024-25 exceeded £25,000, this would require a full audit. Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR documents had been circulated prior to the meeting. Councillors agreed to all questions 1 – 9 in Section 1 and the figures 1 – 10 in section 2. Trust funds not applicable. Cllr Lingard proposed adoption of AGAR Sections 1 and 2, seconded Cllr Alston – unanimously agreed.

**21. Clerk's report/correspondence**

Proposed White Elm Solar Farm (Wickham Skeith, Mendlesham and Thwaite) – consultation details had been circulated 9 May – 30 June 2024. A public exhibition was available to the public at Mendlesham Community Centre 31 May 2025 12noon – 5pm.

Warm Homes Leaflets promoting details of loans via Suffolk CC for installation of heat retaining measures/solar panels/heat pumps – circulated and would be reported in the Parish Magazine.

**22. Chair's Report – none.**

**23. Any other business for information exchange/future agenda requests**

Cllr Alston reported three new telegraph poles with solar receptors had appeared in the village. These were solar receptors to track water usage and water pipe leaks.

**24. Date of next meeting: Monday 2 June 2025, 7pm at Wetheringsett Village Hall.**

Meeting closed 8.40 pm

Signed:

Chairman

Date:

County Councillor Report – May 2025

**Increasing School Places for SEND Students**

On Tuesday 1 April, Cabinet voted to increase the number of school places in the county for children and young people with special education needs and disabilities (SEND), using £18.6m of available capital funding. The plans agreed include opening specialist units within existing mainstream schools, which would create around 100 new places for SEND students for the academic year beginning in September 2025. The second proposal agreed was to allocate up to £12m to create satellite provisions of the existing special schools in Suffolk, with a view that these would open in September 2026 and create another 100 places. The possibility of the council opening its own independent school was also discussed, and may be explored in the future. Since the Cabinet report was tabled, the government has announced that Suffolk will receive an extra £9,441,348 from the Department for Education to invest in new SEND school places. Plans will now be drawn up by the Local Area SEND Partnership on how to spend the money.

**Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service Action Plan**

Cabinet on 1 April also discussed the proposed action plan to improve the Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service, following the Home Office's recent publication of their inspection report which found several areas for action, including improvement to the leadership and culture of the service, and ensuring members of staff felt confident about raising concerns. Cabinet agreed to approve to £1.6m to fund the necessary improvements, and reversed planned IT savings of £0.106m this year to fund the IT improvements needed. Progress on the action plan will be monitored by the Fire Service Steering Group, which is chaired by the Cabinet Member, Steve Wiles. The Action Plan will also be examined by the council's Scrutiny Committee. The next inspection of the fire service is due in 2027.

## New Government Funding for Adult Learning

The Department for Education has allocated Suffolk County Council up to £4m to be spent delivering free skills training to an extra 1,345 adults across Norfolk and Suffolk this year. The money will be used to support the council's 'Skills Bootcamps', which help residents gain the specific skills they need to gain well-paid jobs with local employers. Courses last up to 16 weeks and offer a combination of online and in-person learning to suit a variety of schedules, this flexibility makes them ideal for people looking to upskill, change their careers or return to work. The funding also enables local businesses to train new staff or upskill existing employees, with many of the training costs covered. Employers can work directly with training providers to create courses that align with their needs. Those interested in taking part in the Skills Bootcamps can find more information here:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/business/supporting-employers-training-your-workforce/skills-bootcamps>

## 6,000 Public EV Chargepoints Planned

Suffolk County Council will be installing around 6,000 new public electric vehicle (EV) chargepoints across the county. From the summer, thousands of charging points will be installed on residential streets, with many locations suggested by local residents following the survey which was undertaken last year, or by liaison with communities and district/borough councils. The majority of installations will be bollard-style units at the kerbside, suitable for long-stay or overnight charging, when drivers will be able to benefit from an overnight off-peak tariff, and there will also be a dedicated resident's tariff which features discounted charging at all times. Public car parks will also see a number of rapid and ultra-rapid chargepoint installations, for quicker charging. This project has been made possible due to a successful £5.3 million bid by SCC to the government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund. This summer's roll-out will use a proportion of this funding, with a further £16 million of funding provided by the chargepoint operator, *Believe*.

## Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Suffolk County Council has drafted a new strategy to help restore and enhance nature across Suffolk, and has launched a consultation so residents can share their views. The county's Local Nature Recovery Strategy is one of 48 across the country, aimed at addressing the decline in nature and identifying a network of areas to help nature and biodiversity to recover. The plan is for the 48 strategies to create a national 'nature network', proposing actions such as the creation of new habitats, planting of trees and hedgerows, and more sustainable management of existing woodlands and other habitats like grasslands.

The consultation on the Suffolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy is open to everyone in Suffolk - residents, landowners, land managers, farmers, businesses and the wider community. There is also the opportunity to view and respond to maps of local areas, where specific measures to help nature could be taken. Both opportunities to provide feedback will close on 11 June 2025, and can be found at [www.suffolk.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/consultations)

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Cost of Living help and advice: <https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/family.page?familychannel=6>  
 Benefits advice and support: <https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/adult.page?adultchannel=0>  
 Flood preparation advice: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/suffolk-fire-and-rescue-service/fire-and-rescue-safety-advice-in-the-community/what-to-do-in-a-flood>

<https://suffolkprepared.co.uk/get-prepared/risk-advice/flooding/>

Flood recovery advice and support: <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/about/flood-recovery-information-for-suffolk>

## District Councillor Parish Council Report; May 2025

<b>Mid Suffolk new depot on hold</b>	Mid Suffolk have for some time planned to move our waste depot from the centre of Stowmarket, we have called for landowners to come forward with land that might be suitable etc, but due to the Local government changes now being imminent, this move will now be put in hold, until the future of waste service requirements in Suffolk becomes clearer.
<b>Local Government reform</b>	<p>As noted in the last report, the government has announced major changes to the way local government is organised. This includes the creation of new mayoral authorities, and the combining of District and County Councils into unitary authorities.</p> <p>In January, Suffolk County Council voted to apply to the 'fast track' version of these changes. The government accepted this, resulting in the cancellation of the May 2025 County Council elections.</p> <p><b>Creation of unitaries:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Initial plans have been sent to government, and we have received initial feedback, Government have asked how any proposals would be cost efficient and still deliver the services required.</li> <li>- Mid Suffolk will now have a dialogue with our communities to make sure services that are vital will be able to continue as part of any business plan.</li> </ul>
<b>Planning Policy updates</b>	The council held a briefing session for parishes following the government requirement to increase the number of dwellings in Mid Suffolk. The increase is from the previous 535 dwellings per year up to 734. The council wants to ensure that all parishes are aware of the effect of this and can prepare accordingly. An indicative calculation has been made and this indicates an additional dwellings for Wetheringsett is 100 dwellings over the coming 20 year period. These numbers are indicative only at this stage. The briefing session also covered the importance of Neighbourhood Plans and the support available to Parishes in developing one if they wish.
<b>Planning Appeal</b>	The planning appeal at the Sidings in Mendlesham for another a Gypsy & Traveller site has now been determined, given the appeal was dismissed the only thing that has technically changed is that the appeal inspectors upheld the decision to refuse planning permission, but has given the applicant further time to comply with the notice, this could mean removal of all "development" or address the reasons for dismissing the appeal, basically the inspector is giving the applicant time to reapply for planning permission to address the ecological and flooding policy position.
<b>Warmer Homes Grants</b>	In a process to help bring down energy bills for residents and to make council houses warmer, the government has offered the council £2.9m as part of the Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund. This, in addition to Mid Suffolk's Cosy Homes scheme, should allow those with lower incomes to access cheaper energy bills, whilst also improving

	energy efficiency across homes. We are now looking to see if we can add Solar Panels to the scheme.
<b>Funding for community projects</b>	<p>Details of Mid Suffolk Council's community funding can be found at: <a href="http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk">www.midsuffolk.gov.uk</a> – click on the 'Access community funding' button.</p> <p>For advice or further information, please email the grants team at: <a href="mailto:BMSDCgrants@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk">BMSDCgrants@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk</a></p>

Please get in touch if I can be of help:

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