

Wetheringsett cum Brockford Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held Monday 7 September 2026, 7pm at the Village Hall, Wetheringsett.

Present: Cllrs D Howard (Chairman), S Alderton, T Alston, S Dodgson, B Lacey, Mrs R Leech, N Lingard. County Cllr M Hicks, District Cllr A Stringer and 7 members of the public

1. **Apologies for absence** were received from Cllrs Mrs K van Zy, Mrs J Wier and S Wyse
Councillors approved the apologies
2. **Declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda** – none.
3. **Reports**
 1. Police available online at <http://suffolk.police.uk>. No queries were raised.
 2. County Councillor – Cllr Hicks presented his written report (copy attached to the Minutes). Cllr Hicks went on to report on recent developments regarding devolution and the Government's announcement on 7 September 2026 that local government reorganisation in Suffolk had been withdrawn. Further information would be provided.
 4. District Councillor – Cllr Stringer presented his written report (copy attached to the Minutes). Regarding Government changes to the NPPF. MSDC would be running sessions for parish councils to explain the changes. Following the Government announcement today 7 September the Local Government Review had been stopped, district council elections would be going ahead next May 2027.
The nature recovery expenditure was queried. Cllr Stringer stated the project was creating space for nature to recover and to provide public access.
 4. Footpaths – Cllr Mrs Leech reported dog fouling was becoming a problem. A note would be included in the Parish Magazine reminding dog owners to pick up after their dogs.
 5. Trees – the dead tree on the corner of Church Street/Cedars Hill continued to be monitored.
6. **MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

Anti-Social Behaviour – a number of residents were in attendance to voice concerns over continued anti-social behaviour in Wetherup Street and also worryingly the lack of response from Suffolk Police, the incidents having been reported with dates and the nature of the anti-social behaviour over the last two years. The last incident had been in August this year, this had been reported to the police with no response nor acknowledgment received.

The Chair stated that following residents' concerns raised at the July Parish Council meeting a letter from the Parish Council had been sent to the Police & Crime Commission for Suffolk reiterating concerns at the lack of police response to the reports, a reply had now been received from Suffolk Constabulary confirming reports of vehicle and anti-social behaviour incidents had been investigated and formal action taken. In response to ongoing concerns, speed enforcement checks and high visibility patrols to reassure residents continued. Residents were however encouraged to continue reporting any further such incidents with date, time and details.

The Chair thanked residents for their update, it was agreed a further letter was sent to the Police & Crime Commission requesting action and a report. The residents would provide the report and reference numbers to the clerk in support of the reported incidents.

Village Hall Fete – the chair of the VH Fete Committee, Mrs Susannah Howard, attended the meeting to report on the village fete held 27 June 2026 and the Car Boot/Dog show held on 5 September 2026. Mrs Howard reported both events had been hugely successful and had achieved the desired effect of bringing the community together for a social afternoon. Huge thanks were recorded to all those individuals that had helped organise and contribute to the events, this was much appreciated and thanks were recorded to the Parish Council for its contribution of £900 to the organizing costs. The Committee was now looking to plan both events for next year. A report would be included in the next Parish Magazine.

The County and District Councillors left the meeting at 7.50pm
4. **To consider for approval Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held 3 August 2026**
Cllr Alston proposed acceptance of the Minutes, seconded Cllr Dodgson – agreed.
5. **Matters arising from the Minutes for report** – none.
6. **Planning Applications for recommendation to MSDC**
DC/26/ 02030 Plot 3 Oaks Meadow, land North of Lattin Hall, Brockford Road, Mendlesham - Change of Use of Land for continued use for 1 Gypsy / Traveller Pitch - siting 1 residential static caravan (permanent) – a recommendation of refusal was proposed, seconded and agreed on the

grounds the site was in a recognised flood plain.

7. Planning Decisions received from MSDC

1. DC/26/02671: Barns at Green Farm, Pages Green - Discharge of Conditions Application for DC/26/01521 - 4 (Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy), 10 (Access Surface treatment), 12 (Surface Water Discharge) and 15 (Electric Vehicle Charging Points). Approved
2. DC/26/02600: Brockford Railway Sidings, Brockford Green - Discharge of Conditions Application for DC/25/00434 - 4 (Parking and EV Charging Details), 7 (Wildlife Sensitive Lighting Design), 8 (Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan) and 10 (Site Management Plan). Approved.

8. Planning correspondence

DC/26/00130: Land to rear of Ceva Logistics, Norwich Road, Wetheringsett - Notification the application had been referred to MSDC Planning Committee meeting 9 September 2026 - noted.

9. Town Lane smoke nuisance update – reports of a further bonfire on 24 August 2026 had been made to MSDC. The fire had smouldered for several days. An update on enforcement proceedings from MSDC to be chased.

10. To consider locations for proposed ‘Slow Down for Horse and Rider’ signs

Enquiry to be made to Suffolk CC Highways as to criteria and cost of signs.

11. To consider correspondence re. Village Hall vehicular gate

Following a suggestion by a parishioner that the vehicular gate to the Village Hall field should be padlocked following reports of overnight parking on the field by unknown owners of vans/vehicles Councillors agreed the gate should be padlocked. Cllr Alderton offered to obtain a padlock, an amount up to £25 was proposed by Cllr Alderton, seconded Cllr Mrs Leech – unanimously agreed.

12. Wetheringsett Village Hall – reports on the following:

1. Village Hall lean-to roof remedial work

Cllr Dodgson reported a quotation of £4157 plus vat had been obtained to re-roof and remove the existing asbestos roof. A second quotation to demolish the lean-to, replace with a container and waterproof the internal wall was also being sought – this could be a less costly option. Quotations and work to be considered at the next parish council meeting. An asbestos survey would be carried out after completion of the work.

2. To consider Re-Building Cost of Village Hall building

Based on the square metres of the building (235) varying from £1700 to £3000 per square metre a rebuild cost of £600,000 had been estimated. An increase to that figure would be finalised at the next VH Committee meeting.

Drainage – options were still being considered. Item to be included on the next agenda for report.

3. Village Hall drive fencing repairs – complete. The cost of the work £750, had been approved.

4. Village Hall/Parish Council representatives meeting re. future management

Cllr Alderton had met with VH representatives to make an inspection of the hall. The fire doors and main entrance door had been identified as items in need of refurbishment/replacement.

5. Management Committee report

The next draw date for the Wetheringsett Windfall lottery was 28 September 2026, a quiz evening was planned for October.

5. School Licence Agreement – awaiting school written agreement to the licence agreement.

3. Renewal of Village Hall lease – awaiting draft lease from the Diocesan agent.

13. Grasscutting report

Cllr Lacey suggested the whole cemetery was cut and tidied at the next contractor visit.

13. Play Area report

Cllr Alderton reported the replacement small parts would be fitted during the coming week. This work did not impact on use of the equipment.

15. Speed Equipment Report

1. Wetherup Street – siting solar speed sign – awaiting approval of location from Suffolk Highways.
2. Relocation of speed sign post from Park Green – pending above.
3. Report on damaged solar speed sign South Brockford Street – awaiting reinstatement by Suffolk Highways.
4. Mobile sign resiting – Cllr Wyse would replace batteries and locate sign at Wetherup Street pending decision on solar equipment site.
5. Data report – circulated.

16. Telephone Kiosk, Church Street – to consider quotation for repair of stained-glass panel

A cost of £310.00 had been received for the replacement panel. This sum was unanimously agreed. Cost for fitting the panel and a Perspex panel to be obtained.

17. Finance

1. To consider s.137 donation requests. Requests had been received from the following:
Mid Suffolk Citizens Advice
Ormiston Families in Suffolk
A donation of £100 to Mid Suffolk CAB in recognition of parishioner use of the service was proposed by Cllr Alston, seconded Cllr Mrs Leech -unanimously agreed.
Ormiston Families was declined at the present time.
2. Parish Council Insurance – to consider for approval renewal documents due 1 October 2026
Renewal documents had been circulated prior to the meeting. Premium due 2026-27 £647.91.
The auditor had recommended review of the Fidelity cover £50,000. Following receipt of recent Cill monies totalling £9,830 and a current bank balance of £28,946 it was agreed the Fidelity level remained at £50,000. Cllr Dodgson proposed acceptance of the renewal documents, seconded Cllr Lingard – unanimously agreed.
3. To consider for approval revised Clerk’s pay scales 2026-27
Notification of the 2026-27 National Salary Award agreed with NJC (National Joint Council for Local Government Services) had been received showing a 3.3% increase to clerk’s hourly rate. An increase in the clerk’s spinal column point from SCP 22 to SCP23 was also suggested. The above were unanimously agreed.
4. Accounts for payment

Willing Hands Fencing – VH fence repair	£750.00
Cloud Next – gov.uk host domain name	£60.00
Clerk – sal/expen Aug 2026 plus back pay and speed	
Equipment batteries	£526.49
Community Action Suffolk – parish council insurance prem 26-27	£647.91

Cllr Alston proposed payment of the above, seconded Cllr Lingard – unanimously agreed.
5. Finance report
Internal audit report 31.3.26 – items reviewed
Parish Council invoices – councillors to note all invoices to be in name of the Parish Council - complete
Fidelity Insurance cover – remain at £50,000 – complete
Website Accessibility Statement – reviewed by Cllr Dodgson - complete

18. To consider for adoption the following policy documents:

1. Financial Regulations 2026-27
2. Risk Assessment 2026-27
3. Asset Register 2026-27
4. Safeguarding 2026-27
5. Equality and Diversity 2026-27

The above documents had been circulated prior to the meeting. No queries were raised.

Cllr Alderton proposed adoption of the documents on block, seconded Cllr Dodgson – unanimously agreed.

19. Clerk’s report/correspondence – no further items to report.

20. Chair’s Report – no further items to report.

21. Any other business for information exchange/future agenda requests

Mickfield Meadow - Cllr Lacey reported on a scheme proposed to slow down water flow to Debeham during heavy rain. This would involve creating a small lake in the meadow and barriers into the watercourse ditch. Cllr Lacey stated he would monitor and report on any progress made.

22. Date of next meeting: Monday 5 October 2026, 7pm at Wetheringsett Village Hall

Cllr Mrs Leech gave her apologies for the October meeting.

Meeting closed: 8.40pm

Signed:

Chairman

Date:

County Councillor Report – August/September 2026

Council sets out concerns over EcoPower Suffolk solar farm plans

EcoPower Suffolk's proposed development would cover a large area of Mid Suffolk and includes solar panels, battery storage facilities and associated infrastructure. While the council recognises the importance of renewable energy in helping to meet national climate and energy goals, it believes significant concerns remain that have not yet been adequately addressed by the developer.

The council's key concerns include:

- The loss of large areas of best and most versatile agricultural land.
- The impact of construction traffic on local roads and communities.
- Effects on the landscape, countryside views and public rights of way.
- Potential impacts on wildlife, heritage assets and the natural environment.
- Flood risk and water supply issues.
- The safety, design and operation of the proposed battery energy storage facilities.
- The combined impact of this project alongside other major infrastructure and energy developments planned across the area.

These concerns reflect a number of issues raised when the statutory consultation opened in June. At the time, Conservative councillors warned that important environmental information, including surveys on wildlife, archaeology and landscape, had not yet been published, making it difficult for residents to fully assess the proposals. They also highlighted concerns about the potential loss of almost 1,000 hectares of best and most versatile agricultural land, the suitability and safety of the proposed battery energy storage facilities, pressure on local water resources, and the cumulative impact on local communities, heritage assets, rights of way and the natural environment.

Under the Planning Act process, Suffolk County Council is a statutory consultee. Any final decision on the project will be made by the Secretary of State, not the County Council. The council's role is to assess the proposals, represent local interests and seek improvements where necessary.

Suffolk awarded £564,000 for major bus franchising study

Suffolk County Council has secured £564,000 in new Department for Transport (DfT) funding to conduct a full feasibility study into bus franchising across the county. The investment follows the high-profile roll-out of franchised bus services in Greater Manchester, alongside pilot studies in six other authorities. Suffolk is one of the first rural authorities to begin exploring whether greater public control over bus routes, fares and service levels could deliver better outcomes for passengers.

Scenarios to be explored include:

- A single countywide franchise - one unified system covering all Suffolk
- A joint Suffolk-Norfolk franchise - exploring efficiencies and cross-border connectivity
- Three franchises aligned to Local Government Reorganisation - reflecting the proposed administrative boundaries
- Smaller, targeted franchises - focused on key towns, corridors, or demand hotspots
- Alternative hybrid approaches - ensuring no promising model is overlooked

Franchising is increasingly viewed as a way for councils to take control of bus networks, determining where services run, how frequently they operate, and what fares are charged. Supporters say this approach ensures routes meet the needs of passengers and communities rather than prioritising commercial returns for operators. Crucially, the funding means Suffolk can carry out all research at no cost to local taxpayers. The feasibility study will include consultation with residents, bus companies, district and borough councils, businesses and other stakeholders. Details on how and when this engagement will take place will be confirmed as the project develops. Currently, bus services in Suffolk see the county council supplement the commercial network with supported routes, community transport schemes and demand responsive services.

Suffolk County Council plans £18.9 million investment to expand SEND support

A report considered by Cabinet on July 14 recommends allocating £18.889 million of government High Needs Capital Funding to expand local specialist provision between 2026 and 2030. The investment aims to help more children access the support they need closer to home, while reducing pressure on the SEND system and improving outcomes for families across Suffolk. This new provision would be fairly spread across west, north and south Suffolk.

Over recent years, Suffolk County Council has already delivered significant growth in SEND provision, creating around 170 places in mainstream specialist settings and a further 289 places through special school expansions and satellite provision. However, demand continues to rise. The number of children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) has increased by 17% in the past year, from 10,292 in April 2025 to 12,018 in April 2026. The proposed investment would provide:

- 168 new specialist places in secondary schools through specialist bases linked to mainstream schools
- 80 additional places through satellite provision connected to existing special schools
- £2 million to support inclusion in mainstream schools
- £2 million for adaptations and improvements to mainstream schools
- £1 million to develop specialist post-16 provision across Suffolk

The council plans to make use of existing school buildings where possible, helping new provision to be delivered more quickly and cost-effectively than building new schools. The programme will focus on areas where demand is highest, particularly for children and young people with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs and Communication and Interaction needs, including autism.

The report highlights that increasing local provision will help reduce the need for children to travel long distances to access education, improve placement stability, and reduce reliance on expensive independent and out-of-county placements. The council says the investment will also help create a more financially sustainable SEND system while ensuring children and young people receive the right support in the right place.

Matthew Hicks - County Councillor for the Thredling Division

Tel : 01728 628176 Mob : 07824 474741 E-mail : matthew.hicks@suffolk.gov.uk

District Councillors' Report - September 2026

Mid Suffolk finalist for nature recovery work	Mid Suffolk District Council has been nominated for a national award for our nature recovery work, Mid Suffolk has committed £1.8 million over the last few years, investing in land for community access and nature, including land in Stowmarket, Thorndon, and Palgrave whilst expanding its meadow management program.
Wind Turbine proposed on Oaksmere Business Park of the A140 near Yaxley and Eye and Ipswich near to the Orwell Bridge	A new wind turbine is being proposed for the A140 near the former airfield, there is also a proposal for a large turbine on the banks of the river Orwell at cliff quay, the media had suggested that if built the turbine in Ipswich would be the largest structure in Suffolk at 150 mtrs tall, this is of course not true since 1959 the largest structure in Suffolk is and remains Mendlesham Mast at 304 mtrs tall.
Major sports boost with new 3G football pitch and athletics	A new 3 G pitch has been opened in Stowmarket, working with the FA, the Premier League, and the Government's Football Foundation with support from financial contributions from Mid Suffolk to help address health inequalities and improve

track in Stowmarket.	quality of life. The project was finished on budget and ahead of schedule.
Affordable Homes prioritized for local communities	Residents with a connection to local villages will now get priority for affordable housing before housing is offered to the wider district in Mid Suffolk's Allocation Policies. It will still be balanced according to those urgent, critical or in serious need. Veterans, care leavers under 25 and those fleeing domestic abuse remain a high priority.
New NPPF	The Government has announced changes to the National Planning Policy framework, among the changes are restriction on councillors "calling in" planning applications thus removing a key area for communities to have a voice. The government have also announced that they will require a spatial plan linked to the upcoming mayoral authorities, The biggest change for us could be the tightening of housing targets, and the circumstances of invoking the tilted balance in favour of sustainable development will in future have to demonstrate that any harm will be "substantial" if any application is to be refused. Mid Suffolk will be running some sessions to help explain the changes.

Cllr Andrew Stringer
andrew.stringer@midsuffolk.gov.uk
 07774 199061