

Wickmere with Wolterton Parish Council

Minutes of the ordinary meeting held in the Village Hall, Regent Street, Wickmere
on Wednesday 12th March 2025 at 7.30 pm

Present:

Parish Councillors: Lesley Ash (Chair) Richard Hembling Phillida Hurn
Georgina Madeley Barry Markham

Also in attendance:

County Councillor Saul Penfold
Vicky Tovell, Clerk to the Council

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** – received from Cllr Vanessa Tomczynska
- 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – no interests were declared.
- 3. MINUTES** - the minutes of the ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 15th January 2025 were circulated, approved and signed by the Chair as a true record. The minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 29th January were circulated, approved and signed by the Chair as a true record.
- 4. ADJOURNMENT** - the meeting was adjourned to receive NNDC & NCC reports, comments from members of the public and those with a disclosable interest. Item held until County Councillor Saul Penfold arrived at 7.50pm.

Cllr Penfold confirmed there will be no local government elections this May. As Norfolk is one of only 6 counties selected by the government for fast-track devolution, Mayoral elections are scheduled for May 2025, with unitary councillors to be elected in May 2027. Over 3 years, the plan sees local government re-organisation, moving to a combined mayoral authority across Norfolk and Suffolk, and current county and district authorities replaced by larger unitary authorities. Cllr Penfold reported this could result in 3 unitary authorities in Norfolk: Norwich Urban, West and East, and an overall reduction in councillor numbers.

He said current councils will continue to provide back up and shadow services during the transition period. Full council is working to represent priorities for rural communities to government, with working groups discussing issues such as the future of assets and reserves and striving to keep local people informed and maintaining service provision. Cllr Penfold reported interesting times ahead and reiterated his focus will remain on supporting residents and delivering services.

5. CLERKS' REPORT & MATTERS ARISING

1. Grit Bins – the new grit bins were in situ, with the additional grit bin at the crossroads by the Church. It was agreed clerk would contact Highway Services to investigate getting new bin added to Norfolk County's Master List and filling schedule.
2. Local Government Re-organisation and Devolution Information for Small Towns and Parish Councils Briefing (presentation circulated via email) – Cllr Ash had

attended the briefing at Northrepps and reported priorities raised were the future of assets such as Cromer Pier, coastal protection, older people's health and accessibility of post-16 education. Cllr Ash said devolution in Yorkshire was cited as a precedent and although there were areas of uncertainty, local government re-organisation will happen. She reported the ratio of people per councillor will go up due to job cuts. There had been the suggestions parish councils join to combine forces and Local Plans help to represent parishes. Councillors agreed a response to the government consultation, to state concerns smaller parishes may be overlooked in the LGR process and contact reduced with unitary councillors.

3. Any other matters arising from the previous meeting not mentioned below – none

6. HIGHWAYS – to consider any highway matters raised:

1. **NTRO9022** ditch crossing works affecting the WFP5 from its junction with Hall Road to its junction with WFP6. Footpath temporarily closed for duration of works from 28th January to 1st March 2025 but may continue to be closed/restricted until the 16th June 2025. No alternative route.
2. **Potholes** – Cllr Tomczynska and clerk had reported potholes at Squalham. NCC Highways tracking records enquiry as 'in progress'.
3. **Verges** – update to previous annual verge maintenance enquiry, (20-07-24) and councillors' decision to contact contractors ahead of first scheduled cut. Council heard correspondence from NCC (28-08-24) stating hedges are private boundary features in Wickmere and concerns, quality issues, missed road sections should be reported and would be passed to the contractor, Tarmac, ahead of the scheduled cut. Councillors marked areas of concern onto Wickmere map and it was agreed clerk would report to Highways.

7. PLANNING – to hear updates on local planning matters

1. **Planning applications received** – none to date
2. **Planning Decisions from NNDC**
 - **LA/24/1784** - *Wolterton Hall, Wolterton Park. Internal works to Wolterton Hall to satisfy fire safety requirements to include upgrading of a limited number of internal doors with seals and concealed fire rated closers, emergency lighting, protecting escape routes – Approved 31st Jan 2025* (circulated)
 - **RV/24/2512** *Stable House, Wolterton Park. Internal and external works associated with conversion of stable block to form 5 dwellings for holiday letting and events/function facility without complying with condition 2 (approved plans) of Listed Building Consent LA/18/0345 as subsequently varied by listed building consents RV/24/1510 and RV/24/2051 to allow for changes to internal WC, stair and apartment layout – Approved 3th Feb 2025* (circulated)
3. **To discuss invitation** - to visit site of ongoing works at Wolterton Hall. It was agreed to contact the architect and suggest a week-day in the first half of April for available councillors to visit site.

8. FINANCE

1. The bank reconciliation was received, approved, and signed. There was a balance of £24,393.75 in the bank on 14th February 2025 and receipts were noted.
2. Council's Internal Controls and Financial Regulations policies were reviewed and agreed. In line with these policies, council agreed to revoke appointment of internal auditor (Minutes 08-05-24) and appoint Elaine Tinsley as internal auditor for 2024- 2025, as per her quotation at a cost of £30.
3. The following payments were approved and cheques signed (see below).

9. WICKMERE VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (VHMC)

1. The VHMC reported their AGM was held on 25th February 2025 and end of year accounts were presented.
2. To refer any relevant matters to VHMC – there were none

10. CORRESPONDENCE – to review correspondence received:

1. To hear updates on Councillor Penfold's Local Member's Fund and potential surface improvement to passing places on the Aldborough Road (Correspondence with Highways Engineer Mr Le-May, Cllr Penfold and clerk circulated). Further to Mr Le-May's email (05-03-25) Council felt the Aldborough Road passing places warrant improvement and the relative volume of traffic depends on the time of time. It was noted school buses, parents driving children to school, farm traffic, commuters and delivery vehicles use the route. Cllr Penfold would contribute funding from his LMF. It was agreed to contact Mr Le-May to enquire if he could re-consider his decision to not deem the work a priority.
2. Pilot of a Community Resilience Tool via NNDC (info circulated). There was no interest from councillors.
3. Norfolk Community Foundation – various news and funding opportunities (circulated).

11. PARISH MEETING – there were no issues raised at the Annual Parish Meeting for consideration for next agenda

12. TO NOTE LATE CORRESPONDENCE AND REFER TO NEXT MEETING -

To include reports from Councillors

- Report from Cllr Tomczynska on Live-streamed Multi-Agency Flood and Drought Summit on 31-01-25 (heard at Annual Parish Meeting)
- Subscription renewal for NPTS arrived after Agenda was published. Cost is £57.20. Clerk will pay under delegated authority and add to Agenda for next ordinary meeting in May for ratification.

13. NEXT COUNCIL MEETING – Annual Parish Council Meeting Wednesday 14th May 2025

14. TO CLOSE THIS MEETING – the meeting was closed at 9pm.

Receipts & Payments

Date	Payee	Description	Receipt	Payment	Balance
BACS, DD, SO or Transfer					
13-12-24	Bank Statement	98			24,924.29
23-12-24	Octopus Energy	Returned Business Advance Payment	117.87		
03-02-25	V Tovell	Back-dated Pay increase		74.88	
03-02-25	V Tovell	Salary and Expenses		573.53	
14-02-25					24,393.75
For Approval					
29-01-25	NPTS Clerk Training Year End Accounts			60.00	
12-03-25	ROADWARE	2 x Grit Bins		213.48	
12-03-25	V Tovell	Office Stationery		41.38	
12-03-25	V Tovell	Salary and Expenses		698.05	