

Wortham & Burgate Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Wortham & Burgate Parish Council
held on Tuesday 22nd April 2025 in Wortham Pavilion at 7.30pm

Councillors present: Jacky Bradley, Nick Castle, Jenny Piper, Esta Piper, Susan Wright, Liz Leeds, Alain Judd, Stephen Beckett-Doyle, Chris Williams, Carl Baker

In attendance: Jane Challis – Clerk, DC Cllr Warboys, Ed King – Waveney River Trust, David Appleton – Tree Warden, 3 members of the public

Apologies: None.

1. Chair's Welcome and to consider and approve apologies for absence

Cllr Bradley welcomed everyone to the meeting, which started at 7:38pm due to the Annual Parish meeting being held beforehand.

2. To approve the draft minutes of the previous Parish Council meetings -

2.1 Parish Council Meeting held on 18th March 2025 – approval proposed by Cllr Wright, seconded by Cllr J Piper and approved unanimously with 1 abstention (cllr who was not present at the meeting).

2.2 Playing Field Committee Meeting held on 26th March 2025 – approval proposed by Cllr J. Piper, seconded by Cllr Castle and approved unanimously with 6 abstentions (cllrs who were not present at the meeting).

2.3 Common Committee Meeting held on 26th March 2025 – meeting was adjourned due to not being quorate.

2.4 Playing Field Committee Meeting held on 8th April 2025 – meeting was adjourned due to not being quorate.

3. To record declarations of Interest from members in any item to be discussed – Cllr Bradley and Cllr Wright declared a non-pecuniary interest against agenda item 9, being members of the Twinning Association committee. Cllr Bradley declared a non-pecuniary interest against agenda item 14.1.

4. To consider dispensations from members in any item to be discussed – It was agreed for Cllr Bradley and Cllr Wright to participate in agenda item 9, but to abstain from voting. Agreed unanimously with 2 abstentions (Cllr Bradley and Cllr Wright). It was agreed for Cllr Bradley to participate in agenda item 14.1 but abstain from voting. Agreed unanimously with 1 abstention (Cllr Bradley).

7:40pm Cllr Baker arrived.

5. To adjourn the meeting for public participation - 7:41pm

5.1 To receive residents' questions or comments – None.

5.2 To receive reports from District & County Councillors –

DC Cllr Warboy's report can be found at the end of the minutes; Appendix 1.

CC Cllr Fleming's report can be found at the end of the minutes; Appendix 2. Cllr Fleming advised that she will be conducting a site visit of her division with Andrew Moore, the new Highways Officer

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for this area. A member of the public asked if signage could be looked at. The Clerk said that signage in need of repair/replacement in Wortham had recently been reported to Highways, and that a review of Burgate and the edge of Wortham would be undertaken too. Highways have already replied to one of the reports, no. 00516493, regarding the leaning school 20mph sign, and advised that following assessment, it does not meet their intervention criteria so no action will be taken. Cllr Fleming advised that some signage repairs may need to be paid for by the PC if they fall outside of Highway's remit, and also recommended sending photos with any reports raised.

6. To reconvene the meeting – 7:50pm

7. To receive the Chair's report – Cllr Bradley has received a request from David Appleton for the council to consider an application to register Wortham Ling as an Asset of Community Value (ACV). Cllr Bradley invited Mr Appleton to explain his request. Mr Appleton said there is concern regarding the way the Ling is being maintained and managed. The car park is in need of improvements and visitors have taken to parking on the verges instead; this encroachment is causing erosion to the Ling. MSDC are obliged to manage the Ling due to its SSSI status; however, nothing has been done for many years, and it has been difficult to communicate with the landowner. Mr Appleton has approached an environmental solicitor for advice, and feels that successful registration as an ACV would afford a level of protection, and provide an opportunity for a community group to purchase the Ling should it ever be for sale. Cllr Bradley thanked Mr Appleton and it was agreed for this to be an agenda item for consideration in May.

8. To receive the Clerk's report & o/s actions from the last meeting (For information only) –

- 30mph extension on Mellis Road –Suffolk Highways have confirmed that a construction order has now been raised for this, following completion of the statutory consultation period. Milestone have 14 weeks to complete the work. The invoice for the PC's share of the works £5,933.47 (50% shared with Cllr Fleming) will be issued shortly.
- BMSDC's Planning for the future briefing pack – this is relation to the Government's new housing targets, and the steps Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils are subsequently taking.

The briefing pack includes: Details of the Government's new housing requirements for Mid Suffolk and Babergh, why this has led BMSDCs to review the Joint Local Plan, plus the timetable for the review.

Indicative figures for what the Government's new housing requirements could mean at town and parish level – it must be stressed the figures are indicative and subject to many caveats, but it is important to identify the level of challenge as early as possible.

The importance of Neighbourhood Plans and what support is available to help develop one. Link to the briefing pack:

[file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/Planning%20for%20the%20future%20in%20Babergh%20and%20Mid%20Suffolk%20-%20briefing%20pack%20\(2\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/Planning%20for%20the%20future%20in%20Babergh%20and%20Mid%20Suffolk%20-%20briefing%20pack%20(2).pdf)

The indicative figures for new housing requirements over a 20-year period for W&B are:

Burgate – 20 new houses

Wortham – 90 new houses (110 in total, reduced to 90 taking into account permitted dwellings already started or given permission).

This will be an agenda item for the next meeting, with a view to looking at whether the PC wishes to consider a Neighbourhood Plan.

- Village signage –the damaged/faded/missing signage along the A143 has been reported to Suffolk Highways, and a review of the side roads in and around Wortham & Burgate will be undertaken too.
- The bins outside the village hall, and the items left on the ground around the bins have been reported to MSDC.
- An update on the footpath bridge has been requested from Suffolk Highways, and they have also been asked to check the one at the other end. A resident has reported that this one may be in need of repair too.

- The Asset of Community Value listing against the Manor house expires on the 19th December 2026. MSDC have been contacted to see if they have the authority to intervene regarding the condition of the property and land.

9. To confirm approval for Parish Council Chair to add their signature to Twinning Association Charter

Cllr Williams proposed confirmation of approval (due to it being raised under the Chair's report at the previous meeting, rather than included as a separate agenda item) for the Chair of the Parish Council to add their signature to a proposed new twinning charter between Wortham and Burgate, and Badburgen Germinde in Germany. Seconded by Cllr Castle, and approved unanimously, with two abstentions (Cllr Wright and Cllr Bradley who previously raised non-pecuniary interests as members of the Twinning Association Committee).

8:18pm Cllr Fleming left the meeting.

10. Norfolk & Suffolk Devolution Consultation update

The working party formed at the previous meeting, met to write the PC's response to the consultation, which was then submitted by the Clerk prior to the deadline on 13th April 2025; Appendix 3.

8:20pm Cllr Judd left the meeting.

11. (NSIP) EcoPower Suffolk non statutory public consultation

The project comprises an energy farm with solar PV and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) infrastructure, and consists of four main areas situated around Yaxley substation. The emerging project area extends close to nearby villages including Yaxley, Brome, Gislingham, Mellis, Eye and Occold. Due to the size of the project, which is approximately 250MW, it has been classified as an NSIP, and a non-statutory consultation is currently live until 11:59pm 22nd April 2025.

<https://ecopowersuffolk.com/>

After discussing, councillors agreed they have concerns regarding the cumulative impact of the proposal alongside other energy projects in progress, the implications on food security from the arable farmland being taken out of circulation, the efficiency of solar panels compared to alternative green energy sources, and whether any community benefit funds will be index linked.

The Clerk will submit a response based on these concerns immediately after the meeting as the deadline is at 11:59pm this evening.

ACTION – Clerk as above.

12. Regener8 Power 'Stone Cottages' proposal for solar farm between Burgate and Botesdale

<https://regener8consultations.co.uk/stonecottages/>

Councillors agreed to wait until the TCPA application is received before commenting on the proposal.

13. Regener8 Power 'Red House Farm' proposal for a BESS between Mellis and Yaxley

<https://regener8consultations.co.uk/redhousefarm/>

Councillors agreed to wait until the TCPA application is received before commenting on the proposal.

8:40pm David Appleton left the meeting.

14. To consider, agree and/or note new planning applications:

14.1 To consider – DC/25/01280 – Householder Application – Erection of garden shed (retrospective). Ivy Cottage, Long Green, Wortham, Diss, Suffolk, IP22 1RD – response deferred to allow Planning Committee to look at this application further.

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14.2 To receive an update - DC/24/04449 – Application under S73a for removal or variation of a condition following grant of Planning Permission DC/18/01083 dated 07/07/2018 Town & County Planning Act 1990 (As amended conversion of outbuilding and erection of extension to create annexed accommodation. To vary Condition 4 (Occupation Restriction) See attached planning statement – to allow use of the residential annexe as a holiday let when not required as an annexe. New Waters Farm, Bury Road, Wortham, Diss, Suffolk, IP22 1QH – **AWAITING DECISION.**

14.3 To receive an update - DC/23/05426 – Cross Boundary Application – Installation of a solar farm comprising: ground mounted fixed tilt bifacial solar panels: access tracks; string inverters; transformers; electrical connection compound, storage containers; underground cables and conduits; perimeter fence; temporary construction compound and associated infrastructure and planting scheme. (EIA Development). Land North Of, Lion Road, Palgrave, Part in The Parishes of Wortham and Diss – **Recommended by MSDC Planning Committee and now AWAITING FINAL DECISION.**

14.4 To receive an update on Oak Trees Burgate – **No update.**

15. Wortham Primary School Working Group update

A detailed plan of the common area and track has been requested from Land Registry, in order to finalise the work required. Quotations will then be sought, and the work advertised on the Contracts Finder website if applicable.

ACTION – Clerk to pursue plan from Land Registry.

16. Village Maintenance Committee update, including approval of quotation for clearance work

Cllr Wright received a quotation of £240 from Peter Baxter to clear, level and grass seed the area on the Mellis junction outside the school. This is to maintain the area previously cleared. A further quotation of up to £40.00 every 3 weeks (weather dependant) has been received to keep the area cut and maintained throughout the 2025 growing season.

Cllr Wright proposed approval of the clearance work, and up to £50.00 per month to cut and maintain the area during the growing season. Seconded by Cllr Castle and approved unanimously. Cllr Wright will seek quotations to renovate all 3 bus shelters, but has been advised that changing the roofs to thatch is not feasible. The Clerk advised that a new round of MSDC's Pride in Your Place grant will be opening in June.

ACTION – Cllr Wright as above.

17. Reinstating the ditch along Long Green

Ongoing; no further update. Cllr Williams said that if this work goes ahead, it can be included within the Commons Committee Capital works plan.

18. Grazing of the common

An updated grazing contract to include a requirement for the grazier to hold third party liability insurance, provision for witnesses to ensure the grazier fully understands the terms of the contract, and an up-to-date contact details requirement, was prepared by the Clerk and shared with councillors. However, after discussing, councillors felt that ongoing issues with the ponies getting loose present too high a risk to both the horses and public safety. There is also an issue with the owners not being contactable by telephone. Cllr Castle proposed that the council does not provide permission for the owner to graze their horses on areas of the common owned by the Parish Council. Seconded by Cllr E. Piper and approved unanimously, with 1 abstention.

ACTION – Clerk to advise PC Adam Ferguson and PC Rachel Burton as above.

19. To consider holding Parish Council meetings in the Wortham Pavilion

Cllr Wright proposed that from May 2025, all Parish Council meetings be held in Wortham Pavilion. Seconded by Cllr J. Piper and approved unanimously.

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20. To consider the Clerk using Wortham Pavilion as a work space

Cllr Wright proposed that approval be given for the Clerk to use Wortham Pavilion as a workspace. Seconded by Cllr Castle and approved unanimously. Arrangements to be confirmed; the Playing Field Committee is looking at improvements to the main meeting area.

21. To discuss electricity supply to Wortham Pavilion

After discussing, it unanimously agreed to look at separating the electricity supply to the pavilion and the Tennis Club. Cllr Baker will speak to the electrician who recently carried out some work in the pavilion for the Playing Field Committee.

ACTION – Cllr Baker as above.

22. Parish Council Insurance 2025/26

When the 2024/25 insurance policy was approved, it was on the basis of a 3-year long term undertaking at £1,235.73 annually, with Aviva, through Clear Councils Insurance. Clear Councils are no longer partnering with Aviva, and are instead offering the same level of cover and premium, on a 3-year fixed rate with Ecclesiastical, which will start from 2025/26. They need to know whether the PC wishes to proceed with the new 3-year fixed rate, or a 1-year agreement only.

After discussing, Cllr Wright proposed proceeding with the 3-year fixed rate. Seconded by Cllr J. Piper and approved unanimously.

ACTION – Clerk to instruct Clear Councils as above.

23. Land Registry B224 Notice of proposed alternation of the register re title no. SK285097

Land Registry has advised that a mistake has been made with the above title number relating to land forming part of Long Green. A small section of Highways land, title number SK338958, has been included within title plan SK285097. The proposed alteration is to remove SK338958 from the PC's title plan.

After discussing, Cllr Williams proposed the council has no objection to this alteration. Seconded by Cllr J. Piper and approved unanimously.

ACTION – Clerk to respond to Land Registry as above.

24. Land Registry B224 Notice of proposed alternation of the register re title no. SK285097

Land Registry has received an application from the owner of Hillborough, Long Green, IP22 1PU, to register a right of way over the track (which runs from the Old Stores to the A143 and forms part of title plan SK285097) to their property. This includes a right of way against a highlighted section of the common itself, in favour of Hillsborough, for use as a turning space for vehicles. After discussing, Cllr Williams proposed the council has no objection to the applicant registering a right of way over the track, but does object to the right of way to use a section of the common as a turning space for vehicles, due to it being encroachment of the common and setting a precedent. Seconded by Cllr J. Piper, and approved unanimously with 1 abstention.

ACTION – Clerk to respond to Land Registry as above.

25. Accounts:

25.1 Account Balances as of 15th April 2025

25.1.1	Current Account	£68,635.61
25.1.2	Reserves Account	£74,810.85
25.1.3	Commons Account	£10,164.47

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25.2 Account Payments

25.2.1	Safe & Sound inv. 10848	Mole control March	£60.00
25.2.2	SALC inv 30109	Annual subscription	£413.80
25.2.3	April admin	Salaries – J. Challis and N. Hinton	£796.40
25.2.4	Wortham Village Hall inv 72	February meeting	£24.00
25.2.5	Peter Baxter	Clearance work	£240.00

25.3 Direct Debit Payments

25.3.1	HSBC	Bank charges March	8.00
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25.4 Account receipts

25.4.1	MSDC	Precept	10,499.99
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Additional payments/receipts received prior to the meeting:

25.2.6	J. Challis expenses	Mileage/Land Registry fees	£66.86
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Approval of all payments en bloc was proposed by Cllr Williams; seconded by Cllr Beckett-Doyle, and approved unanimously.

26. To receive and discuss items from Committees / Working Groups

26.1 Playing Field Committee – a meeting is due to be held. Quotations to paint the kitchen and meeting room in the pavilion will be discussed.

26.2 Commons Committee – nothing further to add.

26.3 Finance Representative – nothing to report.

26.4 Employment Committee – nothing to report.

26.5 Planning Committee – nothing further to report.

26.6 New Village Hall Working Group – no updates to report.

26.7 Village Maintenance Committee – nothing further to report.

26.8 VHMC – nothing to report.

26.9 Rights of Way – Cllr Leeds said that the Clerk has obtained working copies of the footpath maps from the AROW Team. However, they are still not clear enough. Also, the finger posts are missing FP numbers.

26.10 Councillors – nothing.

27. Correspondence Received – included within agenda.

28. To receive items for the next agenda – as per the agenda.

29. The Annual Parish Council meeting will be held on 20th May 2025, at 7:15pm in Wortham Pavilion.

Meeting Close – 9:20pm

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