Wortham & Burgate Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Wortham & Burgate Parish Council
Held on Tuesday 15th September 2026 in Burgate Church Hall at 7.20pm (overrun from Playing Field Committee Meeting)

Councillors present: Stephen Beckett-Doyle, Jacky Bradley, Nick Castle, Neil Kewley, Kirsty Neve, Jenny Piper, Chris Williams & Susan Wright
In attendance: Clerk Jane Wright , District Councillor Warboys & County Councillor Paul Bains.
Apologies received from Cllr Alain Judd

1. **Chairs' welcome and to consider and approve apologies for absence -** Councillor Wright welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies from Cllr Judd were unanimously approved.

2. **To receive members' declarations of interest and requests for dispensation on any agenda items -** It was agreed for Cllr Neve to participate in agenda item 17 but abstain from voting.

3. **To approve the draft minutes of previous Parish Council meetings:**
   3.1 Parish Council Meeting held on 28th July 2026 - approval proposed by Cllr Piper, seconded Cllr Castle and approved unanimously as a true record.
   3.2 Planning Committee meeting held on 17th August 2026 - approval proposed by Cllr Castle, seconded by Cllr Wright and approved unanimously as a true record with 6 abstentions (councillors who were not present at the meeting)

4. **Public participation session to include District and County Councillors Reports**
   4.1 To receive residents' questions or comments - None
   4.2 To receive reports from the District and County Councillors - Reports from both Cllr Warboys and Cllr Bains were circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. Appendix 1 & 2
   Cllr Warboys asked if the Parish Council had received information regarding affordable housing, but nothing has been received, so he will chase this up.
   Cllr Bains gave an update of the Local Government Reorganisation which has now been withdrawn for Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex.
   Cllr Wright mentioned that crossing the A143 is becoming more and more difficult. Any speed cameras appear to be at night time and when there are diversions on the A14, so asked if it would be a possibility for an island to be installed opposite the primary school to assist with safely crossing the road. Cllr Bains is due to meet with Highways so will see if this is something that can be investigated.

5. **To receive the Chair's Report -** covered elsewhere on the agenda

6. **To receive the Clerk's Report and o/s actions from the last meeting (for information only)**
   - An Asset of Community Value application had been submitted and approved by Mid Suffolk District Council on The Ling. However, the owner of The Ling, has now asked for a review of the decision. The decision will be reviewed by 4th November.
   - Two emails have been received from residents with concerns over the state of The Manor House which has fallen into disrepair. The Clerk has emailed Star Pubs for an update on any potential repairs or possible new tenant, but has yet to receive a reply. One email asked if it would be appropriate to apply for a Section 215 notice under the town & Country Planning Act 1990. Clerk to make further enquiries to see if this is something that could be actioned.

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- A Planning appeal has been made on Sunnyview, Long Green, Wortham.
- Emails have been sent to several previous Councillors and local residents to ask if they would be willing to assist in the preparation of a Community Emergency Plan. A notice has also been added to the website and Facebook page.
- No reply from Suffolk Highways regarding the Traffic Surveys.
- The Smaller Authorities' Audit Association have advised that they will be introducing a new digital AGAR Portal designed to make the submission and management of Annual Governance and Accountability Returns (AGARs) simpler, more secure and more efficient. The portal is expected to be available for the 2027 AGAR submissions. The Digital AGAR Portal will be voluntary for the 2027 AGAR submission and it is expected to become mandatory for the 2029 AGAR submissions. Online training is booked for November.
- Two emails have been received asking about ownership of 2 different parcels of land. Maps of the areas were shown to Councillors. Clerk to contact residents.

7. To consider, agree and/or note new planning application:

7.1 To receive an update for Application for Planning Permission - DC/26/03209
Proposal: Householder Application - Installations of a ground mounted solar array with 110 panels.
Location: The Old Rectory, Mellis Road, Burgate IP22 1QD - AWAITING DECISION

7.2 To receive an update for Application for Listed Building Consent - DC/26/03210
Proposal: Application for Listed Building Consent. Installation of a ground mounted solar array with 110 panels.
Location: The Old Rectory, Mellis Road, Burgate IP22 1QD - AWAITING DECISION

7.3 To receive an update for Application for Planning Permission - DC/25/03257
Proposal: Application for Planning Permission - Construction of a ground mounted solar panel arrays and associated infrastructure which will have the ability to export 49.9 MW (AC) electricity. Construction of a new vehicular access. (EIA Development)
Location: Land at Stone Cottages, Bury Road, Botesdale, IP22 1QH
Reason(s) for re-consultation: Additional information and Environmental Statement Addendum Received. - AWAITING DECISION

7.4 - To receive an update for Application for Planning Permission - DC/26/02626
Proposal: Change of use of land to residential and erection of garage
Location: Keswick Lodge, Magpie Green, Wortham, Diss, Suffolk IP22 1RG - AWAITING DECISION

7.5 - To receive an update for Application for Listed Building Consent - DC/26/01392
Proposal: Retrospective application for a full roof replacement
Location: 2 Hilltop Cottage, Long Green, Wortham, Diss Suffolk IP22 1PW - AWAITING DECISION

7.6 - To receive an update for Planning Permission - DC/26/01610
Proposal: Householder Application - Erection of a two-storey rear extension, replacement porch and internal alterations
Location: Marsh Cottage, The Marsh, Wortham, Diss Suffolk IP22 1PN - REFUSED

7.7 - To receive an update - Oak Trees, Burgate NO UPDATE

7.8 - To consider Application for Planning Permission - DC/26/03848
Proposal: Planning Application - Change of use and conversion of an existing cartlodge/workshop to form 1no dwelling; including a new vehicular access an private amenity area
Location: Old Marias Cottage, Long Green, Wortham IP22 1RD - Details of the planning application were circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. Cllr Castle proposed that the Parish Council have no objection to the application, seconded Cllr Williams and approved Unanimously. Clerk to add details to the Planning Portal.

8. **Wortham Pavilion Improvement update -** Pre Planning Application meeting has been held with the architect and Mid Suffolk District Council. We have now received the Pre Ecology report and there is evidence of bats, although there were no bats roosting at the time of the survey.
The next step is to seek a Pre Planning Ecology enquiry to see the next steps, although further bat surveys can now not take place until Spring 2027.
In the meantime, we will be looking at funding options eg. Lottery Funding etc

9. **Botesdale & Rickinghall Men's Shed -** The Parish Council were approached about Men's Shed, which is a project that Botesdale & Rickinghall are currently putting together. They are currently trying to look for land to house the project. Currently over 50 men are supporting the project. Clerk to invite a speaker to attend the next Parish Council Meeting.

10. **Flooding on Long Green and removal of foreign trees/saplings -** The issue of reinstating the ditch along a section of Long Green was initially looked into in January of last year. Initial enquiries meant that BT Openreach would need to be contacted to ascertain if there is any cabling that would mean the ditch could not be reinstated.
Clerk to contact BT Openreach to source the maps and information required. The ditch, if possible, would be reinstated under the Commons Capital Works.
Cllr Beckett-Doyle asked if the trees that were planted on the corner of Long Green and the track (aspen and maple) could be removed. Last year they were cut down but are now growing vigorously. As the trees are not on Parish Council common land, this is not something that the Parish Council can address.

11. **To receive an update on the signs and ponies on the Common -** The signs are now in place on the commons; 1 by the entrance to the Post Office, 1 at the start of Harts Lane and 1 on the junction of A143 and Church Road. Some of the ponies are now not on Parish Council land. However, the ponies have been fly grazing for a considerable time now. Cllr Castle proposed that enforcement to remove the ponies be taken, seconded Clr Piper and unanimously agreed with 2 abstentions. Clerk to contact Suffolk Wildlife Trust to seek advice on the best course of action going forward.

8.18pm Cllr Bains and Cllr Warboys left the meeting

12. **To consider, discuss and agree to updating the Wortham & Burgate Parish Council Website -** Prior to the meeting, details from Pear Space to upgrade the Parish Council website for a limited half price offer of £150.00 were circulated to Councillors. Cllr Wright proposed the upgrade, seconded Cllr Castle and unanimously approved. Clerk to contact Pear Space.

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13. **To receive the External Audit Report for the financial year end 2025/26 -** The Completion of the External Audit for 2025/26 was circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. Cllr Piper proposed that the report be accepted, seconded Cllr Castle and unanimously approved

14. **Donation Requests: Wortham PCC -** request received for funding assistance towards utilities.
Burgate PCC - request received for funding assistance towards utilities.

Cllr Williams proposed donating £450.00 to Wortham PCC and £450.00 to Burgate PCC. Seconded by Cllr Kewley and unanimously approved. Clerk to arrange payments.

15. **To consider & discuss a request for a Second Hand Book Swap Shed -** The Parish Council have been approached to ask if a small shed could be placed on the veranda of the Pavilion and used for a second hand book swap. After discussing the request, the Clerk was asked to contact and find out the level of support within the community for this project and who would be responsible for its upkeep.

16. **Accounts**

16.1 Account balances as of 7th September 2026

16.1.1	Current Account	£39,352.05
16.1.2	Reserves Account	£76,353.07
16.1.3	Commons Account	£10,374.02

16.2 Account Payments

16.2.1	Top Garden Services	Grass Cutting July	4094	£216.00
16.2.2	Top Garden Services	Grass Cutting August	4226	£216.00
16.2.3	Firesite	Fire Alarm Service etc	IN31179	£228.60
16.2.4	HAGS	Zipline Repairs	109552	£3604.42
16.2.5	MN Gardening Services	Cutting Verge Mellis Rd	2	£150.00
16.2.6	Magpie Tree & Fencing	Commons Work	1354	£600.00
16.2.7	Safe & Sound	Mole Control	12063	£60.00
16.2.8	T G Askew	Topsoil for Football Pitch	54936	£144.00
16.2.9	Steven Frost	Various	959	£155.88
16.2.10	HMRC	Salaries	September	Not itemised due to GDPR

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16.2.11	Admin Payments	Salaries	September	Not itemised due to GDPR
16.2.12	J Wright	Office Expenses	July/Aug	£76.02
16.2.13	J Wright	Mileage Expenses	July/Aug	£48.75
16.2.14	PKF Littlejohn	External Audit 2025/26	SB20261638	£378.00

16.3 Direct Debit Payments

16.3.1	O2	Mobile Phone (August)	£30.00
16.3.2	Eon Next	Electricity Pavilion (August)	£62.84
16.3.3	O2	Mobile Phone (September)	£30.00
16.3.4	Eon Next	Electricity Pavilion (September)	£193.05

16.4 Receipts

16.4.1	Interest	Reserves Account (August)	£88.23
16.4.2	Interest	Commons Account (August)	£11.25
16.4.3	UK Power Networks	Wayleaves (2022/2025)	£772.08
16.4.4	Interest	Reserves Account (September)	£82.92
16.4.5	Interest	Commons Account (September)	£11.27

Additional payments/receipts received prior to the meeting.

16.2.15	J Wright	Office Expenses	Laminator/Padlock	£44.77
16.2.16	J Wright	Office Expenses (Pavilion)	Kettle & Kitchen Bin (Pavilion)	£32.00
16.2.17	121 Computers	Norton 360 Laptop Security	49970	£29.99
16.2.18	Safe & Sound	Mole Control	12164	£60.00
16.2.19	Huckle Ecology	Bat Survey Pre Planning	589	£648.00

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Approval of all payments en bloc was proposed by Cllr Kewley, seconded by Cllr Castle, and approved unanimously with 1 abstention against MN Gardening Services (Cllr Neve)
Income & Expenditure Reconciliation and Bank Reconciliation were circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting and approved by the Chair, Cllr Wright.

17. **Commons Grass Cutting -** It was proposed by Cllr Wright that a contract be given to M N Gardening Services to cut the commons and the triangle of grass between the Mellis Road and A143. The contract will consist of twice yearly cuts of the commons and a minimum of 3 and maximum of 6 cuts of the triangle of land between the A143 and the Mellis Road. Seconded by Cllr Piper and unanimously agreed with 1 abstention (Cllr Neve)

18. **To approve the NJC Pay Increase -** IN CAMERA

    8.40pm Cllr Piper left the meeting

19. **To receive items from Committees/Working Groups/ Councillors (for information only)**
    - 19.1 Playing Field Committee - Nothing to report
    - 19.2 Commons Committee - Drainage covered at item 10
    - 19.3 Finance Representative - HSBC Mandate/signatories has now been updated.
    - 19.4 Employment Committee - meeting arranged for September 19th
    - 19.5 Planning Committee - Nothing to report
    - 19.6 Redevelopment of the Pavilion Working Group - covered elsewhere on agenda
    - 19.7 VHMC - Nothing to report
    - 19.8 Rights of Way - The footbridge near Poutney Hall has now been repaired and the footpath at Rodgers Corner has now been reinstated.
    - 19.9 Councillors - Cllr Wright asked if the colour prints from SCC outside the Post Office, Primary School and Burgate could be updated. Clerk to make enquiries. A post has been added to the Parish Council Website and Facebook page to gauge interest in helping to put together a Community Emergency Plan. Cllr Castle and Cllr Neve offered their support. Meeting to be arranged in October to move the project forward.
      Cllr Castle asked if the Parish Council could look into purchasing 2 more SIDs. Clerk to make enquiries and contact Cllr Warboys to see if there are any funds available from the Locality Award.

20. **Correspondence Received -** Covered elsewhere on the agenda
21. **To receive items for the next Agenda**
22. **Date and time of the next Meeting** Tuesday 20th October 2026 at 7.15pm to be held in Wortham Pavilion

Meeting close 8.51pm

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APPENDIX 1

Gislingham Ward
Mellis, Gislingham, Thornham Parva, Thornham Magna, Wortham & Burgate
Wickham Skeith
District Councillors Report - September 2026

The 'Big Conversation' – a chance to fix social care challenges.	Mid Suffolk and Babergh urge people to have their say in fixing adult social care. This follows the landmark review from the 'Casey Commission'. Can take part using this link: The Big Conversation on Care | The Casey Commission.
Progress with SHELF project at Chilton Fields	The new 3G sports pitch and athletic track at Stowmarket High School were completed last week as part of the SHELF project. This received funding from the FA, Premier League and Football Foundation as well as MSDC. Everyone Active will be managing bookings for the use of these new facilities from next month.
E-bikes for hire in Stowmarket	A new solar-powered pod containing 2 electric bikes has been installed at Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre, giving residents the chance to explore the town using a different sustainable travel option. Also a great idea to try out e-bikes before deciding to get one for yourself.
Gateway 14 news	Dali-2 has committed £18.8 million in funding in the Skills and Innovation centre. Dali-2 has been incorporated for a lighting control system designed to improve energy management, simplify maintenance, and support the building's sustainability targets. .
Local housing for local people	MSDC Cabinet agreed to introduce a Parish Connection Priority for new affordable and social rented homes secured through S106 agreements.
Financial assistance for heat pumps	Grants of up £9,000 are now available for households to convert older oil othr gas heating systems with Heat Pump systems. Air source heat pumps typically use three to four times less energy than a traditional boiler to heat a home and produce fewer emissions than a gas, oil or LPG boiler, for a cleaner, more sustainable home. Residents of Suffolk can check their eligibility and register their interest on the Switch Together website.
Derelict Fisons site at Bramford.	MSDC has stepped it to install CCTV to deter anti-social behaviour at the derelict Fisons site in Bramford. There have been a number of serious fire and vandalism incidents over many years. The sit owners, Paper Mill Lane Properties are responsible for the security, but MDSC decided to take action themselves whilst exploring future options for the site with the owners. Unfortunately the planning permission for redevelopment of this site has now lapsed and its future is uncertain.
LGR	The Government has withdrawn its decision to implement Local Government Reorganisation in Suffolk, effectively cancelling the current LGR proposals.
Locality budget	The 2026-27 Locality budgets are now available so I would love to receive applications for funding from any community group in Gislingham Ward. Details can be found on the website https://midsuffolk.gov.uk/w/locality-awards . Please contact me to discuss your application before submitting in.

Roland Warboys MSDC rowland.warboys@midsuffolk.gov.uk
Cllr Gislingham Ward 07484 186121

APPENDIX 2

County Councillor Report

Report for Parish Councils, Sep 2026

Councillor Paul Bains, Hartismere Division. Tel.07889066305 Paul.Bains@suffolk.gov.uk

1. Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

Suffolk has secured a significant victory following the County Council's successful challenge to the Government's Local Government Reorganisation proposals. The proposed three-unitary authority model for Suffolk has now been withdrawn, bringing an end to a process that many feared would have caused disruption to local services and communities. All LGR-related activity and recruitment have been halted, allowing Suffolk County Council to focus fully on delivering services for residents. The administration has also stated that the Judicial Review will not result in costs falling on Suffolk residents, with costs expected to be recovered. Looking ahead, district and borough elections are expected to proceed as normal, while separate discussions on devolution and a potential Norfolk and Suffolk Mayor continue. This outcome provides welcome certainty for local communities and allows attention to remain focused on the issues that matter most to Suffolk residents.

2. Suffolk awarded £564,000 for major bus franchising study

Suffolk County Council has been awarded £564,000 by the Department for Transport to undertake a major feasibility study into bus franchising across Suffolk. The work will explore a range of options to determine whether greater local control over routes, fares and service standards could improve public transport provision. The study will include engagement with residents, local councils, businesses and transport operators, with no cost to Suffolk taxpayers.

3. Highways

JCB Pothole Pro Demonstration: Suffolk County Council continues to explore innovative ways of improving the speed and efficiency of pothole repairs across the county. As part of this work, a demonstration of the award-winning **JCB Pothole Pro** machine will take place in Ipswich on **1 September**. The specialist machine combines the processes of cutting, cropping and cleaning potholes into a single operation and can prepare a pothole for permanent repair in around eight minutes. It is capable of repairing approximately 250 square metres of road surface per day and has been specifically designed to help highway authorities tackle maintenance backlogs more efficiently. Subject to successful evaluation, Suffolk County Council is exploring the possible deployment of up to seven of these machines across Suffolk over the coming months, which could significantly improve repair capacity and reduce repair times.

Highways Staffing Update: I am pleased to report that the vacant highways engineering post which had been contributing to delays in surveying and assessing reported highway defects has now been filled by an experienced highways engineer. This additional resource should help improve response times for inspections, enable defects to be reviewed more quickly and support the timely progression of repairs across the network. Residents are encouraged to continue reporting potholes and highway defects through the Suffolk Highways reporting system, as these reports remain essential in helping prioritise repair programmes.

4. A140 and Transport Infrastructure

Residents travelling along the A140 may be aware of ongoing work to develop proposals for improvements at the A140/A1120 junction at Earl Stonham. The junction has long been identified as a location with

congestion and road safety concerns. Suffolk County Council has approved the next stage of scheme development, including detailed design work and preparation of a business case to secure Department for Transport funding. If approved, the scheme could significantly improve traffic flow and safety on this important route serving communities throughout north Suffolk.

5. Sustainable Suffolk Heat Pump Scheme

Residents across Suffolk who are considering replacing ageing heating systems may be interested in a new initiative being delivered through **Sustainable Suffolk** and the **Switch Together** group-buying scheme. Eligible homeowners can access:

- A Government Boiler Upgrade Scheme grant of **£7,500** when replacing gas or electric heating systems.
- A grant of **£9,000** for properties currently heated by oil or LPG.
- Additional savings through collective purchasing arrangements.
- Free, no-obligation quotations from accredited installers.

This initiative is particularly relevant to many rural properties throughout Hartismere where homes are not connected to the gas network and rely on alternate sources of heating. Residents interested in learning more can visit the Switch Together and Sustainable Suffolk websites for further information.

6. EcoPower Suffolk Update

EcoPower Suffolk has confirmed that the statutory consultation for the proposed Solar Farm closed on 16 August 2026, with hundreds of responses received from residents, parish councils and stakeholders. The project team is now reviewing all feedback alongside environmental, technical and planning assessments. The developer has advised that consultation feedback will help inform the next stage of the project and may result in changes to the proposals. A further Community Liaison Group meeting will be held once the review is complete to present the findings and any proposed amendments to the scheme. As your County Councillor, I will continue to monitor the project and keep parish councils informed of any significant developments.

7. Supporting Hartismere Residents

During the past few months I have:

- Continued to meet and correspond with residents regarding highways, planning, transport and public service issues.
- Raised highway maintenance concerns and requests for intervention across the division.
- Worked with parish councils and community groups on local priorities.
- Attended council meetings, briefings, and community events on behalf of residents.
- Continued discussions with council officers and Cabinet Members regarding infrastructure and service delivery improvements.

8. Division Contact and Support

If you have specific issues regarding local county services, school transport allocations, or unresolved highways defects, please contact me with your relevant case reference numbers.

Please get in touch with me if you have questions or comments: *Paul.Bains@suffolk.gov.uk__Tel: 07889066305*