

Wortham & Burgate Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Wortham & Burgate Parish Council
held on Tuesday 20th May in Wortham Pavilion at 7.15pm

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

In attendance: Jane Challis – Clerk, CC Cllr Fleming, DC Cllr Warboys, David Appleton – Tree Warden, 1 member of the public

Apologies: Stephen Beckett-Doyle.

1. To elect a Chair of the Parish Council 2025/26

Cllr J Piper nominated Cllr Wright, who indicated that she was willing to stand. Cllr Wright proposed by Cllr J Piper, seconded by Cllr Judd, and approved unanimously with 1 abstention (Cllr Wright). Declaration of Acceptance of Office signed and witnessed by the Clerk.

7:19pm Cllr Fleming arrived.

2. To elect a Vice Chair of the Parish Council 2025/26

Cllr Williams nominated Cllr Castle, who indicated that he was willing to stand. Cllr Castle proposed by Cllr Williams, seconded by Cllr Wright, and approved unanimously with 1 abstention (Cllr Castle). Declaration of Acceptance of Office signed and witnessed by the Clerk.

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

Cllr Wright welcomed everyone to the meeting, and apologies received from Cllr Beckett-Doyle were approved unanimously.

Cllr Wright proposed a vote of thanks to Cllr Bradley for her hard work as Chair over the last two years. Unanimously approved.

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

2.1 Parish Council Meeting held on 22nd April 2025 – approval proposed by Cllr Wright, seconded by Cllr Castle and approved unanimously.

2.2 Playing Field Committee Meeting held on 18th April 2025 – approval proposed by Cllr Baker, seconded by Cllr J. Piper and approved unanimously with 5 abstentions (cllrs who were not present at the meeting).

5. To record declarations of Interest from members in any item to be discussed – Cllr Bradley declared a non-pecuniary interest against agenda item 18.1.

6. To consider dispensations from members in any item to be discussed – It was agreed for Cllr Bradley to participate in agenda item 18.1 but abstain from voting. Agreed unanimously with 1 abstention (Cllr Bradley).

7. To adjourn the meeting for public participation - 7:24pm

7.1 To receive residents' questions or comments – None.

2025/PC/17.....

Chair, Wortham & Burgate Parish Council

7.2 To receive reports from District & County Councillors –

CC Cllr Fleming read through her report, a copy of which can be found at the end of the minutes; Appendix 1.

Cllr Baker raised concern regarding the potential for solar farms to cease trading before the end of their term without removing the equipment. This is classified as hazardous waste and would be left for the landowner to dispose of, as has been seen with domestic solar companies. Cllr Warboys said that in the case of an application being received via the TCPA (Town & Country Planning Act) route, this is addressed as a planning condition. With a larger NSIP (Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project) application, Bron Curtis MSDC Principal Planning Officer, has previously advised that the landowner is responsible for ensuring this is covered in the agreement they make with the energy company.

Cllr Wright thanked Cllr Fleming for her report.

DC Cllr Warboys read through his report, a copy of which can be found at the end of the minutes; Appendix 2.

7:38pm Cllr Fleming left the meeting.

Cllr Warboys highlighted the changes to waste recycling. Cllr Wright asked if the new bins provided will be chargeable to residents. Cllr Warboys confirmed they will not.

7:42pm Mr Appleton and 1 member of the public arrived.

Cllr Wright commented that the Sports Infrastructure Fund mentioned with Cllr Warboys's report, should be considered for updates and improvements to the pavilion.

Cllr Wright thanked Cllr Warboys.

7:44pm Cllr Warboys left the meeting.

8. To reconvene the meeting – 7:45pm

Cllr Wright proposed moving to agenda item 15 which Mr Appleton and the member of the public advised they were in attendance for. Approved unanimously.

(15. To consider application to register Wortham Ling as an Asset of Community Value)

Mr Appleton and the member of the public were given permission to contribute during this item by the Chair. Mr Appleton reported that they have been in touch with a solicitor to seek advice on management of Wortham Ling and ensuring the local authority (MSDC) fulfil their duties. The solicitor's fees are estimated to be in excess of £5,000.00, depending on the steps that need to be taken, and whether it is necessary to instruct a Barrister. Local residents have already pledged £3,230.00 towards this. Mr Appleton would like to know whether the council is willing to contribute. This will need to be a future agenda item.

Mr Appleton feels that listing Wortham Ling as an ACV (Asset of Community Value) would be beneficial to their cause.

The Clerk advised that there is no cost to complete an ACV application.

After discussing, Cllr Castle proposed the council submit an application to list Wortham Ling as an ACV. Seconded by Cllr E. Piper, and approved unanimously.

ACTION – Clerk to prepare and submit application.

8:04pm Mr Appleton and the member of the public thanked the council, and left the meeting.

2025/PC/18.....

Chair, Wortham & Burgate Parish Council

9. To receive the Chair's report – Previous Chair Cllr Bradley, reported that the beacon was lit at 9:30pm on the 8th May, as part of the nationwide lighting ceremony to commemorate VE Day 80, and that a litter pick is due to be arranged.

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

- Neighbourhood CIL payment – there is a payment due of £2,941.01 from DC/20/04953, (one new dwelling, White House, Rectory Road, Wortham), which should have been received in April. I have spoken to MSDC who have advised it has become a debt case, and they are in conversation with the developer to arrange a plan to pay the outstanding CIL.
- Community Police Engagement Officer / grazing of the common - PC Adam Ferguson, who issued the Notice to the owners of the ponies, is no longer the local CPEO. He has been replaced by PC Gedney.
- Devolution & local government reorganisation – email received from Cllr Mellen leader of the District Council, with information information and invitation to join workshops, which aim to provide communities an opportunity to shape the way forward. Email also received regarding a briefing hosted by SCC in eye Town Hall on 11th June, 7:30-8:30pm. Two invitations per council; Sue and Nick have requested to attend.
- EcoPower Suffolk – the response to the non-stat consultation was written and sent immediately after the April meeting to meet the deadline:
Wortham & Burgate Parish Council has significant concerns regarding EcoPower Suffolk's proposal.
The council feels there is a lack of co-ordination between this proposal and the numerous other energy projects coming through in this immediate area. These include proposals being received via the TCPA route, as well as other NSIPs like National Grid's Norwich to Tilbury. The cumulative impact will be hugely detrimental to the parishes of Wortham and Burgate, as well as the wider community and surrounding areas.
The council also has concerns regarding the efficiency of solar farms as a provider of renewable energy, compared to other options such as wind turbines. The amount of land required to site the solar panels, much of which is prime agricultural land and an important part of our food security, is disproportionate when compared to the energy output provided.
The council would also like clarification as to whether the suggested annual community benefit fund of £125,000.00, is index linked.
A more detailed response will be submitted by the council once the statutory consultation is received in the autumn.
The statutory consultation has been moved from autumn 2025 to spring 2026.
- Regener8 Power – Stone Cottages & Red House Farm. Marengo Communications, acting on behalf of Regener8 Power, have said that the TCPA applications for these two projects will be submitted around 17th June 2025. They have offered to attend the June PC meeting to explain the proposals and answer any questions.
- Bron Curtis (MSDC Principal Planning Officer) has shared a new interactive map of Suffolk NSIPs. Unfortunately, it doesn't show the cumulative impact in the way the PCs were hoping. <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/planning-waste-and-environment/major-infrastructure-projects-including-nsips/nsips-in-suffolk>
- A resident has reported further potentially unapproved works on the land opposite Hill Farm on Mellis Road, including a container. I have spoken to the enforcement officer from MSDC who has said the container would be change of use requiring planning permission. The landowner is permitted to change of use of land for up to 28 days per calendar year, under Permitted Development rights. If the container is still there after 28 days, she will contact the land owner.
- Dead willow tree on A143 – David Appleton raised his concerns with Jessica after the last meeting. She advised that it will be discussed with the new Highways Officer. Awaiting his update on this, and the signage.

- Manor House – Star Inns have a new Estate Manager who I have contacted for an update. I have also asked MSDC whether there is anything within their authority they are able to do again regarding the condition of the property and grounds.

11. Members’ consent to receive summons electronically

All councillors present provided their verbal consent to receive the summons electronically.

12. LGA Model Councillor Code of Conduct

Prepared by the Clerk and sent to councillors prior to the meeting. Cllr Williams proposed re-adoption of the LGA Model Councillor Code of Conduct. Seconded by Cllr Castle and approved unanimously.

ACTION – Clerk to update and publish.

13. To confirm members of Committees and Working Groups

Planning Committee: Cllr Castle, Cllr J. Piper, Cllr Wright, Cllr Leeds, Cllr Judd

Playing Field Committee: Cllr Baker, Cllr Castle, Cllr Bradley, Cllr J Piper, Cllr E Piper

Commons Committee: Cllr Williams, Cllr Leeds, Cllr Judd, Cllr Bradley, Cllr Baker

Employment Committee: Cllr Castle, Cllr Bradley, Cllr Wright

Village Maintenance Committee: Cllr Wright, Cllr Castle, Cllr J Piper, Cllr Liz Leeds, Cllr E Piper

14. Parish Councillor co-option

An application has been received from a resident who was unable to attend this meeting, but has attended previously as a member of the public. After discussing councillors agreed the resident meets all the required criteria. Cllr E Piper proposed the resident be co-opted onto the council. Seconded by Cllr J Piper and approved unanimously with 1 abstention.

ACTION – Clerk to advise the resident and arrange for the necessary forms to be completed.

15. To consider application to register Wortham Ling as an Asset of Community Value.

As above.

8:22pm Cllr Judd left the meeting.

16. Consideration of a Neighbourhood Plan

Deferred to next meeting.

17. (NSIP) White Elm Solar Farm non statutory public consultation

This is a proposal for a new solar PV and battery energy storage system (BESS). The non-statutory consultation started on the 19th May, and runs until the 30th June 2025

<https://www.whiteelmsolarfarm.com/>

After discussing, councillors agreed to defer a response to the consultation until the June council meeting, to allow them more time to consider the details.

ACTION – Councillors as above.

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

18.1 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.

Councillors noted that despite requesting an extension to comment, this application has been granted.

18.2 To consider – DC/25/01663 – Householder Application – Demolition of existing conservatory, creation of new sunroom, new steel portal for vaulted ceiling, new gable bifold door and gable glass light, new Velux roof lights to slate roof, new side elevation bifold doors. The Hawthorns, 1 Cobbold Close, Wortham, IP22 1PL.

Councillors agreed unanimously they have no objection to this application.

ACTION – Clerk to add no objection comment to MSDC Planning Portal.

2025/PC/20.....

Chair, Wortham & Burgate Parish Council

18.3 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 – **NO UPDATE**

18.4 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 – **APPROVED.**

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

19. 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.

20. Village Maintenance Committee quotations:

- 1) Renovation of 2 bus shelters along the A143 to include repairs to the roof and internal redecoration – quotation of £968.00 plus vat received from Steve Frost for bus shelter on school side of A143. No repairs required to the bus shelter on the playing field side of the road.
- 2) Construction and installation of new information boards outside Burgate Church and Wortham Post Office – quotation received of £475.00 plus vat from Steve Frost, for repairs to the boards near the Post Office, bus shelter, and at Burgate Church.
- 3) Replacement of Perspex cover on the information board adjacent to the bus shelter on the school side of the A143 – deferred.

Cllr Castle proposed approval of quotations 1 and 2. Seconded by Cllr E Piper and approved unanimously.

There was a discussion on further works required including new inserts for the information boards, a new footpath map holder, assessment of the information boards on Magpie Green and Wortham Ling, and the noticeboard outside Burgate Church.

ACTION – Clerk to look at purchase of new inserts and map holder, and whether the board on Wortham Ling is included on the council’s asset register. Cllr Baker to look at condition of Magpie Green board. Cllr Williams to look at work required to noticeboard near Burgate Church.

21. Playing Field Committee quotations:

- 1) Specialist paint for spring horse – quotation received from Wicksteed for £25 plus vat per litre (white paint). Approval proposed by Cllr Castle, seconded by Cllr Baker and approved unanimously.
- 2) Painting of interior of the pavilion – quotation received from Perfect Homes Property Maintenance and Renovation for £1,520.00. Approval proposed by Cllr Baker, seconded by Cllr J. Piper, and approved unanimously.
- 3) Replacement outdoor table tennis balls/bats – Home Leisure Direct (suppliers of the table) £27.95 for 4 bats and 8 balls. Approval proposed by Cllr Castle, seconded by Cllr Baker and approved unanimously.

ACTION – Clerk to order spring horse paint and table tennis bats/balls. Cllr Wright to advise Perfect Homes, and request paint chart.

2025/PC/21.....

Chair, Wortham & Burgate Parish Council

22. Electricity supply to Wortham Pavilion

Cllr Baker reported that the electrician is due to look at the supply on the 22nd May.

ACTION – Cllr Baker to meet with electrician as above.

23. Land Registry B13 Notice of proposed alternation of the register re title no. SK285097

Following the council’s objection to the registration of a right of way to use a section of the common as a turning space for vehicles, Land Registry has responded to say they find the objection groundless. A deadline of the 29th May has been provided to allow the council to seek legal advice. After discussing, it was agreed to request a further extension, and to contact SALC for advise.

ACTION – Clerk as above.

24. Accounts:

24.1 Account Balances as of 15th April 2025

24.1.1	Current Account	£64,171.40
24.1.2	Reserves Account	£74,918.09
24.1.3	Commons Account	£10,179.04

24.2 Account Payments

24.2.1	Safe & Sound inv. 10914	Mole control April	£60.00
24.2.2	Community Heartbeat Trust	New defibrillator pads	£86.34
24.2.3	May admin	Salaries – J. Challis and N. Hinton	£796.40
24.2.4	Wortham Village Hall inv 73	March PC meeting	£24.00
24.2.5	Wortham Village Hall inv 86	April PC meeting	£24.00
24.2.6	Wortham Village Hall inv 73	Window cleaning August & December 2024	£40.00
24.2.7	Wortham Village Hall inv 73	Window cleaning March 2025	£20.00
24.2.8	Suffolk County Council inv. 9557927	Contribution (50%) for 30mph extension on Mellis Road	£5,933.47
24.2.9	Suffolk County Council inv. 9557918	Contribution (50%) towards school flashing lights.	£2,881.00

24.3 Direct Debit Payments

24.3.1	HSBC	Bank charges April	8.00
--------	------	--------------------	------

Additional payments/receipts received prior to the meeting: none.

Approval of all payments en bloc was proposed by Cllr Baker; seconded by Cllr Castle, and approved unanimously.

Cllr Wright proposed transferring £40,000.00 from the current account to the reserves account.

Seconded by Cllr J Piper and approved unanimously.

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

25.1 Playing Field Committee – Cllr Baker reported that the ferret man will start work to address the rabbits in August. He needs written permission from the council, which the Clerk will provide. A meeting will be arranged to discuss the Sports Infrastructure Fund mentioned within Cllr Warboys

2025/PC/22.....

Chair, Wortham & Burgate Parish Council

report, and quotations will be sought for updates/improvements to the pavilion accordingly. One of the loos in the pavilion is currently blocked and out of use, it appears the problem may be misuse by members of the tennis club. It was agreed for the Clerk to arrange for a plumber to investigate, and the repair costs will be forwarded to the Tennis Club, if the issue is found to be caused by their misuse.

26.2 Commons Committee – meeting arranged for the 4th June, at 5:30pm in the Pavilion, to discuss capital works.

26.3 Finance Representative – nothing to report.

26.4 Employment Committee – nothing to report.

26.5 Planning Committee – meeting arranged for the 17th June at 6:45pm in the pavilion.

26.6 New Village Hall Working Group – Cllr Castle advised that the Architect will be coming out to the pavilion the week after half term.

26.7 Village Maintenance Committee – nothing further to report.

26.8 VHMC – Nothing to report.

26.9 Rights of Way – The Clerk has contacted Ken Larcombe from the SCC AROW team regarding the outstanding repairs to the footbridge on FP 039, and the missing FP numbers on the FP posts.

26.10 Councillors – Cllr Castle asked the Clerk to contact MSDC to report the numerous cars being parked on the verge next to Burgate Church. It is believed the cars belong to a MSDC tenant. Cllr Baker raised the issue of the bins next to the bottle banks, which are often overflowing and attracting fly tipping. The Clerk will ask the village hall committee if the bins can be moved behind the village hall.

26. Correspondence Received – email received from a resident requesting more dog bins on Wortham Ling. Clerk replied to advise that the management of the Ling has already been brought to the council's attention. Email received requesting the signage, overgrown verges, dog bins, and speed limit along Sycamore View Burgate be looked at; future agenda item/Village Maintenance Committee. A resident has requested that the risk of wildfires on the common be looked at; Commons Committee. A resident has copied the Clerk into a complaint to Suffolk County Council regarding the blocked drain on Willow Corner. Cllr Fleming responded to say she has reported it to the Floods Team. Cllr Williams said it appears the drain has now been cleared, the Clerk will check with SCC.

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

28. The next meeting will be held on 17th June 2025, at 7:15pm in Wortham Pavilion.

Meeting Close – 9:32pm