

Wortham & Burgate Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Wortham & Burgate Parish Council
held on Tuesday 17th June 2025 in Burgate Church Hall at 7.15pm

Councillors present: Susan Wright, Jacky Bradley, Nick Castle, Jenny Piper, Liz Leeds, Carl Baker, Michelle Canty

In attendance: Jane Challis – Clerk, DC Cllr Warboys, David Appleton – Tree Warden

Apologies: Stephen Beckett-Doyle, Alain Judd, Esta Piper, Chris Williams

1. 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, Cllr Judd, Cllr E Piper, and Cllr Williams were approved unanimously.

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

2.1 Annual Parish Council Meeting held on 20th May 2025 – approval proposed by Cllr Baker, seconded by Cllr J. Piper and approved unanimously.

2.2 Commons Committee Meeting held on 6th June 2025 – approval proposed by Cllr Baker, seconded by Cllr Leeds and approved unanimously with 4 abstentions (councillors who were not present at the meeting).

3. To record declarations of Interest from members in any item to be discussed – Cllr Wright and Cllr Bradley declared a non-pecuniary interest against agenda item 21, as members of the Twinning Society.

4. To consider dispensations from members in any item to be discussed – It was agreed for Cllr Wright and Cllr Bradley to participate in agenda item 21, but abstain from voting. Agreed unanimously with 2 abstentions (Cllr Wright and Cllr Bradley).

5. To adjourn the meeting for public participation - 7:21pm

5.1 To receive residents’ questions or comments – None.

5.2 To receive reports from the District and County Councillors – CC Cllr Fleming and DC Cllr Warboys’s reports can be found as addendums at the end of the minutes.

6. To reconvene the meeting – 7:22pm

Cllr Wright proposed moving to agenda item 9 for which Mr Appleton was in attendance. Approved unanimously.

(9. Consideration of funding request to engage solicitor re management of Wortham Ling)

Further to the previous meeting, Mr Appleton reiterated that the Friends of Wortham Ling have been in touch with a solicitor to seek advice on the management of Wortham Ling. They believe that MSDC has misinterpreted their responsibility under the Schedule of Management. Local residents have already pledged over £3,000.00 towards this, and Mr Appleton would like to know whether the council is willing to contribute towards the £2,500.00 shortfall. Mr Appleton confirmed they have not approached MSDC for funding, believing there to be a conflict of interest. Cllr Warboys felt they should apply to MSDC anyway. A discussion ensued with councillors raising questions around how Local Government Reorganisation will affect MSDC’s potential liability, how widely the campaign has been advertised within the community, ie are residents outside of the Ling area aware?

Cllr Castle proposed the council pledges £500.00 towards the solicitor costs, if £5,000.00 is achieved by the Friends of Wortham Ling. Seconded by Cllr Bradley and approved unanimously.

7:54pm Mr Appleton thanked the council, and left the meeting.

- 7. To receive the Chair's report** – Cllr Wright provided an update on Suffolk County Council's Local Government Reorganisation briefing, held in Eye on 11th June 2025, which she attended with Cllr Castle. Cllr Wright felt that the briefing was poorly put together, with Cllr Castle adding that the lack of unity between the District and County Councils is a misuse of public resources.

7:57pm Cllr Castle left the meeting.

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

- White Elm Solar Farm - Non-statutory consultation from 19 May - 30 June 2025 – notification has been received that this project has been paused indefinitely. Councillors noted speculation that it may be politically motivated due to upcoming changes to the Planning and Infrastructure Bill.
- Regener8 Power – Stone Cottages & Red House Farm; the TCPA applications are yet to be received (previously advised to be received around the 17th June).
- Land opposite Hill Farm on Mellis Road – the container is still in situ, the MSDC Planning Enforcement Officer will be conducting a site visit next week, and contacting the landowner, as has confirmed that it does constitute a planning breach.
- A report has been received from a resident, that bonfires are being lit on land belonging to Highways, along Furze Way. Trees have been scorched by the bonfires. It has been reported to SCC Highways.
- Dead willow tree opposite the Manor House – SCC have advised that it will now be felled within the next 3 months, due to the public safety risk it poses.
- Manor House – MSDC Planning Enforcement have advised they will be sending an official letter to Star Inns requesting they take action tidy up the property and land.
- Governance Review 2025 – Mid Suffolk conducted a district wide Community Governance Review in 2022, however due to the district witnessing a rise in interest from parish/town councils for a new community governance review, a new one is being held with a submission window of 27th October to 7th November 2025. Due to local government reorganisation (LGR) this review will not include any requests involving boundary amendments but will consider the other CGR arrangements in the interest of forward planning. This will be a future agenda item.
- Waterfields have advised they will be carrying out the agreed work to the Post Office track, during the August holiday.

9. Consideration of funding request to engage solicitor re management of Wortham Ling

As above.

10. Consideration of a Neighbourhood Plan

Deferred to a future meeting.

11. BMSDC proposed revised Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedules – consultation 28th May to 9th July 2025

Given the need to provide infrastructure to support new development within both Districts and rising infrastructure costs, both Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils have agreed to undertake a formal consultation for a period of six weeks, on proposed increases in the rate of CIL to be charged on certain developments; full details sent to councillors prior to the meeting.

After discussing, and taking into account the impact of the Local Government Reorganisation on whether the new Unitary Council will be a CIL charging authority, councillors agreed unanimously that they have no comment against this consultation.

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

12.1 To consider – DC/25/02215 – Full planning application – construction of open-sided agricultural building. West End Farm, The Common, Mellis, Suffolk, IP23 8EF. No comment against this application recommended by Planning Committee; agreed unanimously.

12.2 To consider – DC/25/02216 – Full planning application – construction of open-sided agricultural building. West End Farm, The Common, Mellis, Suffolk, IP23 8EF. No comment against this application recommended by Planning Committee; agreed unanimously.

ACTION – Clerk to add no comment response to MSDC Planning Portal for both applications.

12.3 To receive an update – 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 – **Granted.**

12.4 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 – **Updated requested from MSDC.**

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

13. Grazing of the common

PC Sophie Buckle from the Rural Crime Team, has recommended the council erects signs on the areas of the common it owns, stating that permission to graze has not been provided. Once this has been done, she will be able to look at further action. The Clerk will create the notices and Cllr Baker offered to install them on stakes.

ACTION – Clerk/Cllr Baker as above.

14. Wortham Primary School Working Group update

No further updates; waiting for detailed plan of the common area and track from Land Registry, in order to finalise the work required.

ACTION – Clerk to pursue plan from Land Registry.

15. MSDC Sports Infrastructure Fund Application

The new Mid Suffolk Sports Infrastructure Fund is available to support community groups in Mid Suffolk develop and expand sport & physical activity infrastructure. Between £20,000 and £250,000 can be applied for towards major infrastructure improvements to indoor and outdoor sports facilities outside of Stowmarket. The Fund is open for expressions of interest, which are assessed on a monthly basis by a Grants Panel using a scoring matrix.

After discussing, it was agreed to submit an application for internal and external work to the pavilion. These improvements will not be negated by the redevelopment proposals. Cllr Wright will obtain a quotation for internal work, including a new heating system and solar panels. The Playing Field Committee has already received a quotation for the FA for improvement to the pitch. The Clerk will speak to MSDC to register the council's intent to submit an application.

ACTION – Clerk/Cllr Wright as above.

16. Quotations to investigate drainage issues at the pavilion, and repair toilet flush system

DrainDoctor has investigated the issue with the blocked loo, advising that the flush system needs to be replaced. There was no charge for this initial visit. They have recommended a camera inspection to fully assess the condition of the pipework, and have provided a quotation of £270.00 plus VAT. The flush system needs to be replaced by a plumber, and a maximum quotation of £200.00 has been received.

Cllr Baker proposed proceeding with the camera inspection and replacement of the flush system. Seconded by Cllr J. Piper and approved unanimously.

ACTION – Clerk to arrange for works to be carried out as above.

17. Quotations to install internet connection to the pavilion

The Clerk has sought quotations to install an internet connection (without phoneline) to improve the pavilion as a work and meeting space. Cllr Baker proposed proceeding with the quotation from BT for a two-year term at £31.94 + VAT per month, with a one-off installation charge of £9.95.

Seconded by Cllr Canty, and approved unanimously.

ACTION – Clerk to arrange installation as above.

18. Electricity supply to Wortham Pavilion

Cllr Baker reported that he is due to meet the electrician tomorrow, to look at the possibility of splitting the electricity supply with the Tennis Club.

ACTION – Cllr Baker as above.

19. Village Maintenance Committee quotations for information board inserts, new leaflet holder, and work to additional information boards.

The quotations for the information board inserts, and work to additional information boards deferred to next meeting. The Clerk has already ordered the additional leaflet holder, and submitted an expenses claim for reimbursement.

Cllr Wright reported that the work to the bus shelter is due to be carried out next week. Cllr Baker said the Magpie Green information board is still there, but has fallen over.

Cllr Bradley asked if the committee could arrange for the shrubbery outside the front of the pavilion to be cut back to a manageable level.

ACTION – Clerk to look at purchase of new inserts, and whether the board on Wortham Ling is included on the council's asset register. Cllr Williams to look at work required to noticeboard near Burgate Church. Cllr Wright to add shrubbery outside the pavilion to works list.

8:53pm Cllr Warboys left the meeting

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

No further update as yet.

ACTION – Clerk to pursue update.

21. Gift to Badbergen Town Council from Wortham & Burgate communities to commemorate the occasion of the signing of their twinning agreement

Cllr Wright said that Designer Makers in Diss have quoted £180.00 to create a commission piece to present to Badbergen Town Council. After discussing, and noting the Clerk's advice that expenditure of this nature comes under Section 137, Cllr J Piper proposed the council covers the full £180.00 cost. Seconded by Cllr Baker and approved unanimously with two abstentions (Cllr Wright and Cllr Bradley, having previously declared non-pecuniary interests).

ACTION – Cllr Wright/Clerk to arrange order with Designer Makers as above

9:00pm Cllr Castle returned to the meeting.

22. Approval of Accounting, AGAR statements, and CIL expenditure Report 2024/25

Prepared by the Clerk and shared with councillors. Approval proposed by Cllr Baker, seconded by Cllr Castle and approved unanimously. Cllr Wright and the Clerk then signed the AGAR statements and CIL Report.

ACTION – Clerk to update and publish.

23. Accounts:

23.1 Account Balances as of 12th June 2025

23.1.1	Current Account	£64,098.11
23.1.2	Reserves Account	£75,022.44
23.1.3	Commons Account	£10,193.22

23.2 Account Payments

23.2.1	Safe & Sound inv. 10982	Mole control May	£60.00
23.2.2	June admin	Salaries – J. Challis and N. Hinton	£796.40

23.3 Direct Debit Payments

23.3.1	HSBC	Bank charges May	8.00
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Additional payments/receipts received prior to the meeting:

23.2.3	P. Baxter	Village grass cutting May & June	£120.00
23.2.4	J. Challis expenses	Mileage (£34.20), table tennis bats/balls (£27.95), leaflet holder (£12.29).	£74.44

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

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

24.1 Playing Field Committee – Committee members met recently to clean the play equipment. A meeting has been arranged for the 24th June at 6pm in the Pavilion.

24.2 Commons Committee – a meeting was held on the 4th June and capital works were agreed.

24.3 Finance Representative – Cllr Wright said that it was inappropriate for her to act as both Chair and Finance Representative, so Cllr Castle will now take on this role. The banking mandate will be updated to ensure the signatories and online banking access is up to date.

24.4 Employment Committee – nothing to report.

24.5 Planning Committee – nothing further to add.

24.6 New Village Hall Working Group – Cllr Castle said that the Architect has been back out to look at the pavilion, and will hopefully be in a position to provide some initial plans soon.

24.7 Village Maintenance Committee – a meeting will be arranged.

9:13pm Cllr J. Piper left the meeting.

24.8 VHMC – Cllr Baker reported that he has spoken to the VHMC about the bins. They have ordered a new bin with a lock, but cannot relocate the bins behind the fencing because MSDC need permanent access to empty them.

24.9 Rights of Way – Ken Larcombe from the SCC AROW has said that the FP numbers are not usually shown on the posts. The council is welcome to add them with a permanent marker, but permission will be needed for any other sort of fixing.

24.10 Councillors – Cllr Castle asked the Clerk to contact MSDC about the numerous cars being parked on the verge next to Burgate Church again. Cllr Bradley said a resident has asked whether the lime trees by the post office can be cut back. Cllr Baker reported that he has cleared the area around the bench on Magpie Green.

25. Correspondence Received – all covered elsewhere on the agenda.

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

27. The next meeting will be held on 17th June 2025, at 7:15pm in Burgate church Hall.

Meeting Close – 9:31pm