

Wortham & Burgate Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Wortham & Burgate Parish Council
held on Tuesday 25th November 2025 in Wortham Pavilion at 7.15pm

Councillors present: Susan Wright, Nick Castle, Michelle Canty, Jacky Bradley, Jenny Piper, Chris Williams, Stephen Beckett-Doyle, Esta Piper
In attendance: Jane Challis – Clerk, DC Cllr Warboys, CC Cllr Fleming, 1 member of the public
Apologies: Alain Judd

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

Cllr Wright welcomed everyone to the meeting, and apologies received from Cllr Judd were approved unanimously. Cllr Wright advised that Cllr Baker has sadly resigned from the council with immediate effect.

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

2.1 Parish Council Meeting held on 14th October 2025 – approval proposed by Cllr Canty, seconded by Cllr Wright and approved unanimously.

3. To record declarations of Interest from members in any item to be discussed – None.

4. To consider dispensations from members in any item to be discussed – None.

5. To adjourn the meeting for public participation - 7:22pm

5.1 To receive residents' questions or comments – None.

5.2 To receive reports from the District and County Councillors –

CC Cllr Fleming's report can be found as Appendix 1.

DC Cllr Warboys's report can be found as Appendix 2.

CC Cllr Fleming highlighted the 27th November 2025 deadline for submissions to the Planning Inspectorate, in relation to the Norwich to Tilbury Development Consent Order application from National Grid.

DC Cllr Warboys confirmed he has received the locality award application from the Clerk for the kitchen updates in the pavilion. He also highlighted the section on Biodiversity within his report, and it was agreed for this to be an agenda item for a future meeting.

Cllr Wright thanked Cllr Fleming and Cllr Warboys for their reports.

6. To reconvene the meeting – 7:34pm

7:34pm Cllr Fleming left the meeting.

7. To receive the Chair's report – covered elsewhere on agenda.

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

- The remembrance wreaths were delivered and laid during the services held Wortham Church and Burgate Church.
- Cllr Fleming has a meeting on the 18th December with the new Highways Officer, and will look at any issues affecting Wortham and Burgate, including location for the speed surveys on Long Green and Church Road.
- A meeting was held with Josh Holmes from MSDC to discuss funding options available for the pavilion updates. Following this, the application for funding from Cllr Warboys locality budget was submitted, and Josh has provided funding options which he feels will be more suitable for the pavilion improvements than the Sports Development Grant.

- It appears that the ponies illegally grazing the common have been moved, however signs have been made to erect on the common should this not be the case.
- A resident has requested consideration of a zebra crossing on the A143 be looked again. This will be passed on to the new Highways Officer.

9. To confirm Parish Council Committee members

Planning Committee – Cllr Wright, Cllr Castle, Cllr J Piper, Cllr Judd
 Playing Field Committee – Cllr Castle, Cllr J Piper, Cllr E Piper, Cllr Beckett-Doyle
 Commons Committee – Cllr Williams, Cllr Judd, Cllr Bradley
 Employment Committee – Cllr Wright, Cllr Castle, Cllr Bradley
 Village Maintenance Committee – Cllr Wright, Cllr Castle, Cllr J Piper, Cllr E Piper, Cllr Canty
 Agreed as above.

8:47pm Cllr E. Piper left the meeting.

10. To confirm Parish Council and Committee meeting dates 2026

Parish Council meeting dates 2026

Wortham Pavilion at 7:15pm
 January 27th
 February 17th
 March 17th
 April 21st (including Annual Parish Meeting)
 May 19th (Parish Council AGM)

Burgate Church Hall at 7:15pm
 June 23rd
 July 28th
 September 15th

Wortham Pavilion at 7:15pm
 October 20th
 November 24th

Committee meeting dates 2026 (additional meetings may be called as required, and venues same as above)

Planning – June 23rd at 6:45pm
 Village Maintenance – June 23rd at 6:15pm

Playing Field –
 January 27th at 6:45pm
 March 17th at 6:45pm
 May 26th at 6:45pm
 July 28th at 6:45pm
 November 24th at 6:45pm

Commons -
 January 27th at 6:15pm
 March 17th at 6:15pm
 May 26th at 6:15pm
 July 28th at 6:15pm
 November 24th at 6:15pm

Agreed as above.

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

11.1 To consider – DC/25/04756 – Householder Application – Proposed ground floor shower room extension. Beehive Cottage, The Ling, Wortham, IP22 1ST.

11.2 To consider – DC/25/04757 – Application for Listed Building Consent – Proposed ground floor shower room extension. Beehive Cottage, The Ling, Wortham, IP22 1ST.

Councillors agreed unanimously that they have no comment against either application above.

11.3 To receive an update – DC/25/03103 - Application under S73a for Removal or Variation of a Condition following grant of Planning Permission DC/18/01083 dated 07/07/18 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) Conversion of outbuilding and erection of extension to create annexed accommodation – to vary Condition 4 (Occupation Restriction) to allow for the use of the residential annexe as a holiday let when not required as an annexe. New Waters Farm, Bury Road, Wortham, IP22 1QH – **AWAITING DECISION.**

11.4 To receive an update – DC/25/03257 – Planning Application – Construction of ground mounted solar panel arrays and associated infrastructure which will have the ability to export 49.9MW (AC) electricity. Construction of new vehicular access (EIA Development). Land at Stone Cottages, Bury Road, Botesdale, IP22 1QH – **AWAITING DECISION.**

11.5 To receive an update on Oak Trees Burgate – No update.

12 National Grid Norwich to Tilbury DCO (Development Consent Order) representation

It was agreed for the Clerk to prepare and send a submission on behalf of the council, based on the previous objection comments made to National Grid.

ACTION – Clerk as above.

Response can be found as Appendix 3.

13 Government Consultation on LGR (Local Government Consultation) in Suffolk

Councillors discussed the consultation, with there being a difference in opinion on whether a response should be submitted on behalf of the council, due to the variance in opinions amongst councillors. Cllr Wright asked councillors to send email their views to the Clerk, by the 11th January deadline, to see if there is a consensus to respond as a council.

14 Wortham Post Office Track

The contractor was due to complete the work during October half term, however has since advised that the concrete grids are now obsolete, and unfortunately there are no comparable options available. They have provided quotations to tarmac the area instead which were shared with councillors prior to the meeting. After discussing, it was agreed to proceed with the option to use hot bitumen and tar at a cost of £4,000.00 plus VAT. In addition, the damaged posts will be replaced at a cost of £280.00 plus VAT, and tarmac applied to the dip in front of the roadway at £350.00 plus VAT. Proposed by Cllr Castle, seconded by Cllr Piper and approved unanimously.

ACTION – Clerk to advise the contractor as above.

15 Quotations for cutting of the common and capital works

Rufus Bradley has provided a quotation of £35 per hour to cut the common, and £65 per hour to do work to the ditches and ponds. However, an approximate timescale needs to be provided to in order to consider the overall cost.

The member of the public said that her husband also provides a ground works service and would be able to provide a quotation if required.

ACTION – carried over to next meeting.

8:24pm Cllr Warboys left the meeting

16 Wortham Primary School Working Group

The Clerk has now received the maps from Land Registry showing the boundary between the track around the area of common outside the school, and the neighbouring properties. After viewing the maps and discussing, it was agreed for a working party to look at the work required, in order for quotations to be sought.

ACTION – carried over to next meeting.

17 Suffolk County Council Community Self Help Scheme

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/highway-maintenance/community-self-help-scheme>

The Scheme was recommended by the previous local Highways Officer, as a way to enable the council to have increased authority to carry out a greater range of works within the parish. After discussing it was agreed unanimously to register for the scheme, with the private contractor and community volunteer options being the most relevant.

ACTION – Clerk to register as above.

18 Village Maintenance Committee update and approval of expenditure

Cllr Wright reported that the committee has approved repairs to the bus shelter on Mellis Road, and the pathways are due to be cleared as last year, by the same contractor. It has been agreed to turn the kitchen into a secure office space, and move the kitchen into the main meeting room, and as already reported by Cllr Warboys, an application has been submitted applying for funding from his locality budget to cover the full net cost. An electrician will be providing a quotation to replace all the lights with LEDs, and has identified that there is working underfloor and ceiling heating. He has also advised that it is possible to install a separate meter for the electricity supply to the Tennis Club.

19 Budget 2026/27.

Deferred to next meeting.

20 Parish Councillor co-option

The member of the public was present having indicated their interest in joining the council. Cllr Wright invited them to introduce themselves and explain their interest.

Approval of co-option proposed by Cllr Wright, seconded by Cllr J. Piper and approved unanimously. Cllr Wright welcomed Cllr Neve to the council. Cllr Neve signed a declaration of Acceptance of Office, signed and witnessed by the Clerk.

21 Accounts:

21.1 Account Balances as of 20th November 2025

21.1.1	Current Account	£63,173.65
21.1.2	Reserves Account	£75,512.32
21.1.3	Commons Account	£10,259.78

21.2 Account Payments

21.2.1	Safe & Sound inv. 11398	Mole control October	£60.00
21.2.2	TG Askew inv. 52574	Topsoil (playing field)	£120.00
21.2.3	November admin	J. Challis and N. Hinton salaries	£802.70
21.2.4	J. Challis expenses	Mileage	£74.97
21.2.5	December admin	J. Challis and N. Hinton salaries	£802.70

21.3 Direct Debit Payments

21.3.1	HSBC	Bank charges Oct	8.00
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Additional payments received:

21.2.6	Burgate Church Hall	2025 meeting hire	80.00
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21.2.7	J. Challis expenses	Portable heater for pavilion	35.00
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Approval of all payments en bloc was proposed by Cllr Williams; seconded by Cllr J. Piper, and approved unanimously.

22 To receive and discuss items from Committees / Working Groups

22.1 Playing Field Committee – Cllr Castle asked the Clerk to ensure the invoices to the Tennis Club and Football Club are raised.

22.2 Commons Committee – nothing further.

22.3 Finance Representative – Cllr Wright said the changes to the bank mandate have been requested.

22.4 Employment Committee – annual reviews to be held in the new year.

22.5 Planning Committee – nothing further.

22.6 Redevelopment of the Pavilion Working Group – Cllr Wright has details of two architects to approach regarding the work.

22.7 Village Maintenance Committee – nothing further.

22.8 VHMC – Cllr Canty reported that the VH is looking at fundraising options. The Clerk asked if MSDC have been approached with a view to funding information, and will send contact details to Cllr Canty.

22.9 – Rights of Way – the footpath previously closed for repairs has now been repaired and reopened. A new Footpath Warden for Wortham needs to be appointed.

22.10 Councillors – Cllr J Piper has been approached by a resident regarding works to a property for which they believe planning permission has lapsed.

23 Correspondence Received – all covered elsewhere on the agenda.

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

25 The next meeting will be held on 27th January 2026, at 7:15pm in Wortham Pavilion.

Meeting Close – 8:58pm.

Appendix 1

County Councillor Report



Councils, November 2025

Councillor Jessica Fleming, Hartismere Division. Tel. 07714-597980 Jessica.fleming@suffolk.gov.uk

Norfolk and Suffolk County Combined Authority Web Site – the Norfolk and Suffolk fledgeling Combined Authority is posting current information on a dedicated website - refer to www.norfolksuffolk-cca.gov.uk The site will serve as a central hub for information about the new authority, including the anticipated mayoral election on 7th May 2026.

Asylum Seekers in Mellis – Reportedly there are now 4 asylum seeking families or groups in Mellis housed in properties acquired by SERCO, one of the Home Office’s contractors. No further information is available. Please refer to a link to the regional Strategic Migration Partnership website find out more about responsibilities for refugees & asylum seekers in this part of England. [What we do - Local Government East](#) .

Bird Flu - Sadly, there have been outbreaks at several commercial poultry facilities in West Suffolk and in Norfolk. DEFRA’s Animal & Plant Health Agency (APHA) has imposed restrictions on the premises. More information on the locations of outbreaks can be found at: [APHA Interactive Avian Influenza Disease Map](#) SCC Trading Standards is managing enforcement of controls and is working with owners of poultry.

EcoPower Suffolk - is holding meetings through its Community Liaison Group about plans for a large (approx. 3,000 acre/ 600 ha) solar farm with Battery Electric Storage (BESS) and a connection to National Grid’s substation in Yaxley. This is part of its non-statutory consultation process, SCC’s response to this consultation is provided separately and includes concerns over ‘mission creep’ – the potential for future amendments to expand on approved plans such as is happening with Sunnica in West Suffolk. Refer to: Applicant’s request for Non Material Amendment [https://nsip-documents.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/published-documents/EN010106-006029-Letter%20to%20DESNZ%20re.%20Reduced%20Consultees%20\(003\)_Redacted.pdf](https://nsip-documents.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/published-documents/EN010106-006029-Letter%20to%20DESNZ%20re.%20Reduced%20Consultees%20(003)_Redacted.pdf)

The date for the next liaison meeting is Thursday 27th November: 14:00 – 15:00. See [EcoPower Suffolk - Solar Farm and Battery Energy Storage](#)

National Grid Pylon Scheme - The application for the Development Consent Order (DCO) has been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) by National Grid and accepted for examination by the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the Secretary of State – [Planning Inspectorate’s website](#).

There is still time to [register to have your say](#) . The deadline to register is 27th November 2025.

When you register, please state the following at the beginning of your comment:

- 1. If you are objecting; supporting or commenting*
- 2. What your primary reason is for submitting a representation, for example ‘air quality’.*
- 3. If applicable, please state if you are a statutory undertaker or a statutory consultee or an affected person (someone who is listed as a category 1 or category 2 person in the book of reference)*

Suffolk County Council is objecting to the proposals, its Relevant Representations maintain its long-held, opposition to the scheme. We encourage Parish Councils and local communities to register and comment - [Click here](#) The county council's objections primarily include:

- a clear preference for alternative options, in particular cable undergrounding or an offshore solution
- to formally and strongly request National Grid pausing the proposals, to enable the effective consideration of the alternatives.

Please get in touch with me if you have questions or comments: Jessica.fleming@suffolk.gov.uk Tel: 07714-597980
Twitter: @jesstfleming

Appendix 2

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S November 2025

LGR update	<p>The government consultation on the two LGR proposals for Suffolk was opened last week and runs through until January 11th.</p> <p>The website for the District and Borough Councils' three-unitary proposal www.threecouncilsforsuffolk.org has been refreshed, it is now easier to navigate and has a link to the government consultation. Whilst promoting the benefits of the three council option, it also plays fair by pointing residents to both MSDC proposal and the county's 'One Suffolk' proposal.</p>
Biodiversity and Nature Recovery	<p>The UK's biodiversity duty is a legal obligation, reinforced by the Environment Act(2021). All public authorities in England must integrate the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity into their core functions. Public bodies must determine specific policies and objectives for biodiversity action, take action to achieve these, and review their efforts at least every five years.</p> <p>Mid Suffolk District Council declared a biodiversity emergency in 2021. A Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), arising from the work of a dedicated Task Force, was put in place.</p> <p>The majority of the actions from the first BAP were delivered, including:• Mapping of our tree cover – on average 8.5% against national average of 14.5% • Planting thousands of trees and hedges• Surveys of our wildlife sites• Creating new wildflower meadows</p> <p>The Draft Suffolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy identifies species and habitats of particular importance to the county, and the threats to them, it helps to build a picture of the scale of the challenge with arresting biodiversity decline; the causes and measures needed in response.</p> <p>The budget for a revised BAP has been approved by cabinet and focusses on a broader range of habitats and species, and also recognises the co-benefits that the BAPc and deliver on issues such as water quality, flood management and public health and well-being.</p>
Armed Forces Covenant	<p>Appropriately for this time of remembrance, Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have achieved the bronze award for the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme.</p> <p>This award acknowledges our continued support for the armed forces</p>

	<p>community - from veterans and service personnel to their families, reservists and cadets.</p> <p>It also follows on from our efforts earlier in the year to restate our commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant.</p>
Historic England says retrofitting historic buildings will be fundamental to achieving net zero.	<p>Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils, working closely with Historic England, have just introduced a new Local Listed Building Consent Order – the first rural council in the country to achieve this.</p> <p>It makes sensitive improvements quicker and easier:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary glazing on historic windows - Grade II listed buildings can now have secondary glazing installed on historic windows without needing consent from the council, subject to certain conditions. • Replacement of windows in Grade II listed buildings – Where original windows have already been replaced after receiving listed building consent, they can be replaced again, subject to conditions • Replacement of an existing window in a modern extension to a listed building - Windows in Grade II listed buildings can be replaced, or have secondary glazing installed, if they have previously received listed building consent, subject to conditions.
Funding	<p>Sustainable Communities Food fund: Our Sustainable Communities Food Fund provides grants to small scale food initiatives such as community pantries, fridges and food pop-ups.</p>
Call for Development sites	<p>The Call for Sites runs until 5pm on 9 January 2026, with the exception of Ipswich, which ends on Monday 15 December 2025.</p> <p>This invites submissions of land to be put forward for consideration to be included in Local Plans - for uses such as housing, employment, sports and leisure and community purposes.</p> <p>These are not planning applications, and no site put forward will automatically see development take place.</p> <p>The process involves a form to be completed by anyone wishing to submit sites. The form can be completed online, by email or by post: https://www.babergh.gov.uk/w/call-for-sites</p>
Locality Awards	<p>Any requests for funding must be completed by Jan 2026 so if you have a project that you feel would qualify for funding please contact me.</p> <p>Further information: https://midsuffolk.gov.uk/w/locality-awards</p>

Rowland Warboys MSDC Cllr. Gislingham Ward
rowland.warboys@midsuffolk.gov.uk Tel: 07484186121

Appendix 3

Wortham & Burgate Parish Council's submission to the Planning Inspectorate, re NG Norwich to Tilbury DCO.

Objection to the Scheme

Wortham & Burgate Parish Council strongly objects to National Grid's current proposal for 184km of 50m overhead pylons, to transport power from Norwich to Tilbury.

Whilst the Parish Council acknowledges the government's net zero commitment, and is mindful of related energy security, carbon reduction and energy poverty issues, it recognises the findings of the Hiorns report, in that the need for additional transmission capacity is more likely to be closer to 2034/2035 than National Grid's programme delivery date of 2030.

The Parish council believes that a pause to the scheme is necessary to allow preferable alternatives such as a fully integrated off shore grid, or HVDC underground cables, to be considered and consulted upon. This delay would be more likely to enable delivery of the objectives of this and other projects in the region, whilst minimizing the impacts on the local communities and environment.

Key Impact Issues:

Visual Impact & Heritage

Wortham Ling SSSI adjoins the River Waveney in the south, with several rural lanes, and the Angles Way footpath along its southern boundary. It is the largest lowland heath in the area and an exceptionally beautiful wild common, which is popular with many visitors from nearby villages as well as further afield, who value its unspoilt beauty. Wortham Ling as it is today, represents how many Suffolk villages once looked and is therefore an important asset not just for its natural interest, but also as a visual historical record.

Long Green Wortham is a designated Visually Important Open space. In the Mid Suffolk Local Plan, VIOSs are protected to maintain the visual character of the area. The visual impact of Pylons RG092 to RG100 will eliminate this protected VIOS.

There are 75 listed buildings in Wortham and Burgate; 1 Grade I listed, 3 Grade II* listed, and 71 Grade II listed.

Wortham Church of St Mary the Virgin is a Grade I listed building, and one of only 158 surviving churches with round towers in the country. The visual impact and close proximity of pylons RG093 – 090, and the associated works, or works to implement the Waveney Valley Alternative design, will have a negative impact on this rare and historic asset.

Amendments to the pylon route since the previous consultation, mean it is now within much closer proximity to Burgate, specifically Little Green.

Burgate Church of St Mary is Grade II* listed, with the remains of a ringwork, currently being scheduled for listing by Historic England, and thought to be the site of a medieval manor house, to its west. There have been associated finds of pottery dated as Late Saxon to Medieval, i.e. 1001 AD to 1154 AD. Pylons RG101 to 106 will completely overshadow Burgate Church, and remove the unobstructed views to and from it.

A moated site at Stubbings Entry is also undergoing scheduling with Historic England, and will be directly impacted by the proximity of RG110.

The construction work for the proposed scheme, including the Waveney Valley Alternative Design, and undergrounding work to the existing UK Power Network to the east of Burgate, will be detrimental to these historic buildings, many of which do not have foundations. The work and vibrations pose a risk to their structural integrity.

Biodiversity

The construction activity between RG085 – RG110 will be devastating to the movement of the diverse and rich selection of wildlife that live in and around this area of Wortham and Burgate. Wildlife migration patterns will be disrupted and ecosystems disturbed. The powerlines will pass through natural habitats and pose risks to bird populations due to decimation of the hedgerows as well as potential collisions with the lines. Fisher German, the land agents representing National Grid advise that if the scheme goes ahead, the access roads will be removed upon completion, and the land reinstated. This is simply impossible; the hedges and trees will take years to re-establish, and the damage to ecosystems already done. Wortham and Burgate are home to a variety of wildlife; bats, barn owls, kestrels, tawny owls, roe deer, muntjac, hares, badgers, water voles, hedgehogs, great crested newts, skylarks, yellow hammers, oyster catchers, lapwings, turtle doves, grass snakes and adders. Many of which are protected species.

There is documented evidence of water voles (England's fastest declining mammal and protected under section 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981), great crested newts (a European protected species), pipistrelle bats (protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act), and yellow hammers (classified as a Red List bird species in the UK, and a Priority Species in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan), in Little Green Burgate.

Wortham Ling has a biological SSSI designation on account of its dry lowland heath and acid grassland vegetation. However, the acid heath and grasslands on the Ling also co-exist with small pockets of chalk grassland, which is extremely rare in Suffolk. The Ling also supports Small Heath butterfly, a priority species for conservation, on account of a nationwide decline.

Suffolk Wildlife Trust, working with local landowners, have recently embarked upon a Landscape Recovery project called WaLOR (Waveney and Little Ouse Recovery Project) to enhance natural heritage of the landscape and combat declines in biodiversity. We are concerned that the proposed scheme, whether delivered by way of 50m pylons, or the Waveney Valley Alternative underground cabling, would be completely contrary and detrimental to this project.

The UK government has made a commitment under the G7 Nature compact biodiversity and sustainability agreement to 'support and drive the protection, conservation and restoration of the ecosystems critical to halt, and reverse biodiversity loss and tackle climate change, such as supporting the target to conserve or protect at least 30% of global land'. Wortham and Burgate Council strongly upholds these values, which National Grid seemingly does not.

Public Rights of Way

The proposed scheme, notably pylons RG090 to RG110 will directly affect the extensive network of footpaths, bridleways and byways in Wortham and Burgate, including the Angles Way, making them unsafe for horse riders, walkers, dog walkers, the Wortham Walkers Group and nearby Mellis Cani-Cross Group who use them regularly. Residents' daily lives, routines and leisure activities will be affected, which in turn impacts on mental health and well-being

There are many horse owners in and around the parishes, with a livery at Hall Farm in Burgate. As well as being affected by the impact on bridleways, riders use the lanes daily, which they will no longer be able to do safely. In addition, the overhead high voltage power lines are incompatible with horses. Horses are prey animals and the low frequency noise and magnetic fields can cause a flight reaction.

Many cyclists use the road networks in and around Wortham and Burgate. The Wolf Way is a 250-mile cycle route which passes through Little Green in Burgate. The increase in traffic and HGVs from the proposed scheme will mean that this is no longer a safe or viable route for cyclists.

Construction and Traffic Impact

The increase in traffic and HGVs during construction of the pylons, access roads, compounds, all associated works, and potential Waveney Valley Alternative design, will have an unacceptable impact on Wortham and Burgate.

National Grid's intention to underground the existing 30m tall UKPN pylons to the east of Burgate will have a hugely detrimental impact, specifically to PROW, Grade II* listed Burgate Church, other nearby listed buildings, farmland, and flood control.

Furze Way and Stonebridge Way are both byways which will be hugely impacted by pylons RG108 to 105, and the undergrounding of the existing UK Power Network. They are due to be used as service roads, for which they are completely unsuitable. Furze Way has been the subject of complaints from residents for many years, due to the poor state of repair making it hazardous for vehicles, pedestrians, horses and cyclists, and prone to flooding. Yet it is due to be used as a service road, which is simply unacceptable.

The Parish Council has been campaigning for many years to address public and road safety concerns with the A143 as it passes through the village, and to extend the 30mph speed limit on Mellis Road.

In National Grid's Preliminary Environmental Report, Appendix 16.3 shows the expected increase in HGV traffic on the A143 as being 20%, made up by an additional 478 vehicles daily, of which 268 will be HGVs. This is unacceptable for an extremely busy road, which is already the subject of public and road safety concerns, and the site of a busy primary school.

The three lanes leading in and out of the proposed hall roads in Little Green Burgate are completely unsuitable for HGVs. They are narrow single-track lanes, with very few passing places, raising huge health and safety concerns. Both Wortham and Burgate have suffered significant localised flooding in recent months, with some roads becoming impassable, and several properties in Burgate being subjected to internal flooding. The Parish Council has concerns that the flood risk will increase significantly as a result of disruption to the natural drainage of surrounding farmland, from undergrounding of the UK Power Network to the east of Burgate, and damage to verges and ditches caused by HGVs and construction traffic.

The same report states the number of vehicles on Burgate Little Green's roads will increase by 251 vehicles a day, 84 of which will be HGVs. If the baseline survey had included 1 vehicle, and not 0 as recorded by National Grid, the increase would equate to 25,100%, which would be the highest increase along the route. This increase will put pedestrians, including school children and elderly residents who walk along these roads to access bus services on the Mellis Road, at extreme risk.

The expected increase in HGVs on nearby roads is similarly unbelievably high:

Thornham Road – 371% increase

Eastlands Land – 6308% increase

Lion Road – 215% increase

B1113 – 93% increase

The Parish Council has concerns that an increase from local and through traffic, using alternative roads to avoid those officially being used for construction traffic, will be seen.

The Parish Council also objects to the amount of noise from construction work should the project go ahead. This construction activity will result in varying amounts of noise each day from 24 decibels up to 110 decibels. In addition, the proposed working hours are unacceptably long and include weekends and Bank Holidays. As the nights draw in, flood lights will be needed to light the construction which will visually impact our dark night skies with light pollution.

Local Businesses, Properties and Mental Health/Wellbeing

There are many local businesses in Wortham and Burgate which will be negatively impacted by the proposed scheme. Many of these are tourist led such as holiday lets, and rely on visitors who are attracted by the wildlife, unique landscapes, and heritage of the parishes.

The proximity of the pylons will also negatively impact property prices. The Parish Council is aware that knowledge of National Grid's proposals is already affecting interest in the village and property values. This, combined with the other key impact issues is causing high levels of anxiety and distress to residents, affecting their mental health and well-being.

Breaches of Holford Rules

The Parish Council believes there are several breaches in the guidelines on overhead line routing, first formulated in 1959 by Sir William later Lord Holford, who was a part-time member of the CEGB. They are known as the 'Holford Rules.' National Grid continues to employ them as a basis of the company's approach to overhead line routing.

Rule 2: Avoid smaller areas of high amenity value, or scientific interests by deviation; provided that this can be done without using too many angle towers, i.e., the more massive structures which are used when lines change direction. Where possible choose routes which minimise the effects on the setting of areas of architectural, historic, and archaeological interest including Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, Listed Parks and Gardens and Ancient Monuments; - Wortham Ling is a SSSI, Wortham Long Green is a VIOS, Redgrave and Lopham Fen National Nature Reserve to the west of Wortham Ling is both an SSSI, an NNR and a RAMSAR site. Burgate Wood is a 75-acre medieval woodland and an SSSI. Wortham Church is Grade I listed. Burgate Church is Grade II* listed. The route passes in close proximity to many other listed buildings in Wortham and Burgate.

Rule 3: Where possible choose inconspicuous locations for angle towers, terminal towers and sealing end compounds; the siting of a compound at byway Furze Way/Stonebridge Way, and Dam Lane will be completely conspicuous.

Rule 4: Choose tree and hill backgrounds in preference to sky backgrounds wherever possible; and when the line has to cross a ridge, secure this opaque background as long as possible and cross obliquely when a dip in the ridge provides an opportunity. Where it does not, cross directly, preferably between belts of trees: - The route will site 50-metre-high pylons against the large sky background in Wortham and Burgate of open countryside, Common Land and farmland.

Rule 5: Prefer moderately open valleys with woods where the apparent height of towers will be reduced, and views of the line will be broken by trees: - The ruling states 'Where possible avoiding cutting extensive swathes through woodland blocks and consider opportunities for skirting edges of copses and woods. Protecting existing vegetation, including woodland and hedgerows, and safeguard visual and ecological links with the surrounding landscape'; – the pylon route cuts through a beautiful, wooded area at the bottom of Furze Way in Burgate, and runs within close proximity to Burgate Wood which is an ancient medieval woodland and an SSSI. Wortham Ling SSSI, is rich in existing vegetation which enjoys the acid grassland and sandy soil, and is bordered by areas of woodland. It will be negatively impacted by the placement of pylons, or undergrounding.

CONSULTATION

Wortham and Burgate Parish Council does not consider it has been consulted in a way that is open, fair or transparent, and the consultation presented has been legally deficient since 2022.

The Parish Council has identified the following deficiencies in National Grid's consultation process:

Consultation meetings have all been timed for during the working day, denying working people the chance to have their say. There has only been one meeting in Gislingham, timed 1pm-6pm. The meetings were felt by members of the public not real consultation more paying lip service to a process.

The Public Consultation/Information Events have been held in locations inaccessible by public transport.

The Parish Council and its residents were not consulted when the proposals were at a formative stage. The route was predetermined. The decision for pylons was also predetermined. This is against the Gunning Principles.

Information on the proposals has been inaccessible to many people.

The maps sent to householders are small scale area maps, generic and lacking in detail.

Information has only been sent to householders within 1km of the pylon line when the visual impacts of the project are far wider.

The interactive online map does not show all properties, only listed buildings.

Internet access is required to fully access the proposals and their supporting information

The supporting documents on National Grids website are not labelled or indexed in a way that makes them straightforward to access. Information is being deliberately obscured.

National Grid has failed in making residents aware of the increased traffic requirements to build the infrastructure.

National Grid has failed to make the information available and user friendly for the residents.

Staff at the consultation/information events have not had the necessary knowledge to respond to queries.

Parishioners report that staff have avoided responding to pertinent questions.

There has been no personal engagement with homeowners who are adversely affected.

Homeowners do not feel the issues they have raised in feedback to previous consultations have been addressed.

Homeowners seek personal engagement given the life changing impact of these proposals

The impact of the proposals on property prices has not been assessed. This is an important omission in the process

National Grid has made no attempt to assess the impact of the proposals on health and mental health/wellbeing. This is an important omission in the process.

National Grid has failed to give residents any faith in the process – most have been left with the impression that their views will be ignored, and that the outcome is a foregone conclusion.

When the targeted consultations were held January to March 2025, the decision to renege on the Waveney Valley Alternative proposal was not included. Given the importance of this specific area, it is inconceivable that there was no consultation on this decision.

