

WEREHAM PARISH COUNCIL
Annual Meeting of the Parish Council
12 May 2025 at 6.50 pm
In the Community Room, Wereham Village Hall, Wereham

Attendance:

Cllr Sandra Calvert (Chair) (SC)
Cllr Stephen Bradsell (SB) (Vice Chair)
Cllr Jo Wellington-Bruce (JWB)
Cllr Jennie Day (JD)
Cllr Bridget Slade (BS) (From Item 40/25 to 52/25)
Helen Richardson Parish Clerk and Financial Responsible Person

Also in attendance:0

Residents of Wereham - Public – 1 (Item 38/25 to 39/25)
Cllr Martin Storey, Norfolk County Councillor
Cllr Sue Lintern, Borough Councillor, BCKLWN

37/25 Note Openness and Transparency Notice and To Consider

The Chair read the notice and the back of the agenda an extra of the standing orders detailing how Disorderly conduct at meetings was managed as per policy.

The Chair and Councillors welcomed Cllr Jennie Day to her first meeting of the Wereham Parish Council since the uncontested election. Cllr Jennie Day had signed and returned to the Clerk the Code of Conduct and Declaration of Acceptance Form.

The Chair requested at this point that her report from the Annual Parish Meeting also be noted in the minutes of the annual parish council meeting as follows:

Cllr Sandra Calvert – Chair of the Parish Council

Having been voted as chair of the parish council last year this was and has been a privilege although at the time seemed quite daunting. I was taking over from someone who had achieved so much in her time and at times felt I didn't quite know enough, but I soon came to realise that especially with the help and guidance of our fantastic clerk and my fellow councillors this job was made so much easier so thank you Helen and thank you fellow councillors.

I would also like to thank Cllr Sue Lintern and Cllr Martin Storey for their support and wealth of knowledge along with helping us tap into funding where needed. A special mention is to Jackie Hitchin who we sadly lost in December who due to her living in the village nearly all her life, knew so much when it came to us needing to remember things from the past like the cemetery, but one thing I will say, she always had the interests of the village at heart, she will and is missed. Cllr Annie Bruce left the village to start a new adventure and again will be missed for her youthful contribution which on a parish council I feel is vital. She often approached matters from a different perspective which was refreshing.

My main objective and focus were our precept as this affects every household, The aim of myself and other councillors was to keep it as low as possible due to the rising costs of everything. We were pleased therefore that the increase was just 2% which was equivalent to £2.50 per household.

I am pleased that the fully funded project on the biodiversity garden has been fully completed and want to thank Gail, her husband, Nicola, Paula and to anyone else who helped for doing such a splendid job, The interment area at the cemetery was completed and looks befitting in its setting and makes the overall experience for visitors a pleasant one.

The restoration of the spring Monument on the Wereham Pond is nearly complete which came from largely from funding and the parish council

For us councillors who serve the village are often unappreciated for the work that we try and the work that we do, often with criticism, however not one resident has joined us this year at these meetings which is disappointing. Residents can join us at the start of our meetings where they can voice their requests or concerns without staying for the whole formal agenda. I would therefore like our councillors to encourage people to do just that or to contact our clerk directly with ideas or concerns.

I will finish by saying thank you again to everyone for helping me in this role and would like to welcome newly elected Cllr Jenny Day to the team and hopefully once the formalities are over with Bridget Slade.

38/25 To consider and accept apologies for absence.

The Parish Council noted and accepted apologies from Cllr Gail Koopowitz (GK) (Personal reasons) and Cllr Jonathan Marsh (JM) (personal reasons).

39/25 Election of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson

The Chair advised that due to new councillors and two councillors having sent apologies to the meeting, that this would be deferred to the next meeting in July.

40/25 Co-option Parish Council Vacancies

To vote to elect one applicant to fill the vacancy for Co-option on Wereham Parish Council until May 2027 and to sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office for position Councillor.

The Councillors met with the applicant for co-option informally before the meeting. The Council agreed to vote by way of show of hands. There had been one application for co-option received.

RESOLVED: That Bridget Slade be approved for Co-option onto Wereham Parish Council until the next Election May 2027. (Proposed: JWB, Seconded: SB, all were in favour)

The Co-optee signed the Code of Conduct form and Declaration of Acceptance of Office. The Chair reminded all of the importance of directing any matters through the Clerk in dealing with contractors and/or the public, and to advise them to come to the Council as a whole if they have any issues. The Chair advised that new councillors would be provided with an internal induction with the Chair and the Clerk to focus on Wereham and its Parish Councils, as well as training more generally with the Norfolk Association of Local Councils.

41/25 Declarations of Interest

To note declarations of interest on agenda items and dispensation requests. There were none.

For the benefit of the new members Cllr Sue Lintern and Cllr Martin Storey gave an overview of their roles with the Borough Council and Norfolk County Council.

Cllr Sue Lintern gave the following report:

Wereham – Report from Cllr Sue Lintern, Borough Councillor for Wissey Ward

It's hard to believe it's already been two years since I was elected — time has certainly flown!

Let me start with some updates from the Borough Council.

Leadership and Management Changes

At the start of the year, we saw significant leadership changes at the Borough Council. Cllr Alistair Beales was elected as Leader, with Cllr Ring appointed as his Deputy. In June, we also welcomed a new Chief Executive, Kate Blakemore. Later in the year, we carried out further senior management restructuring to improve clarity and responsibility within the Council's operations.

Cabinet Focus and Key Projects

The Cabinet has faced several serious challenges this year. We've been pushing forward with a major £100 million housebuilding programme. We've also made progress on upgrades in King's Lynn as part of the Town Deal – now known as "Vision King's Lynn."

Other key areas have included a review of the Alive Sports and Leisure company, bringing this in-house and a wider look at the Council's long-term strategy.

Financial Situation and Achievements

As with many councils, finances have been a major concern. The cost of running the Borough Council is over £50 million per year, yet our core income from Council Tax, Business Rates, and Government grants is under £22 million. This means we rely heavily on income from services like estate rent, parking, and commercial waste.

Despite this, I'm pleased to say we've delivered a balanced budget while still maintaining strong community support. Over £500,000 has been allocated to projects such as community transport and local festivals.

Planning and Housing

A major milestone was reached on 27th March when the Government formally approved our new Local Plan for 2021 to 2040. This plan is now the basis for all planning decisions and is available on the Borough Council website, complete with an interactive map to check development boundaries for each parish.

We're also working on additional guidance to show how this Local Plan aligns with existing Neighbourhood Plans.

Grants and Community Infrastructure

We've kept our £500,000 grant programme going for community projects and have allocated £2.3 million of Community Infrastructure Levy funding for the 2024–2025 year.

Local Government Reform (LGR)

Local Government Reform (LGR) continues to be a key area of work. KLWNBC has submitted an expression of interest to form part of a proposed three-unitary authority model for Norfolk, alongside Breckland and parts of North Norfolk District Council.

This proposal will require a detailed business plan to be submitted to the government by late September — and understandably, this is taking up a lot of time and resources from both Councillors and officers.

Despite these challenges, our priority remains the same: to look after the welfare and wellbeing of residents and continue delivering essential services.

New Cabinet Role

On a personal note, I'm honoured to have been appointed to the Borough Council Cabinet, where I now hold the portfolio for Culture and Events. I've also been given responsibility for liaising with Parish and Town Councils — a role I'm especially passionate about.

Our local councils play such a vital role at the heart of our communities, and I'm committed to working closely with them, offering support and helping to strengthen those important local connections.

Representing You

I continue to serve on the Borough Council's Planning Committee, where I take part in the discussions and decisions that directly affect our area. I've made it a priority to keep Wereham Parish Council informed about any Borough-level matters that could have an impact locally.

One of the key promises I made when I was elected was to ensure that Parish Councils have easy access to advice, support, and a strong voice within the Borough Council. As part of my new Cabinet role, I'll be taking on the responsibility of Parish Liaison representative. I'm committed to continuing the face-to-face meetings with the Leader of the Council, which have been very well received. These sessions provide a valuable opportunity for councillors to raise local concerns, share ideas, and discuss the issues that matter most to their communities.

Looking Ahead

I'll continue to keep the Parish Council and residents updated on the progress of Local Government Reform and any other developments that could affect this village.

My commitment to representing Wereham remains as strong as ever

Thank you, as always, for your support and for the opportunity to serve this fantastic community.

Warm regards,

Cllr Sue Lintern

Borough Councillor for Wissey Ward

The Chair congratulated sue on her appointment to the Borough Council on the Cabinet.

Cllr Martin Storey:

Welcomed the new members of the parish council. It was a pleasure to attend Wereham Parish Council, with their community and a well-run council with an excellent Clerk and Chair. And thank you for the time that is given to provide an update. As way of an annual review of the last year, he has served on the borough council for 38 years and on the planning committee, and he has spent 12 years on NCC too which has found to be larger concern than the Borough, there is 84 members at NCC, it has consultations on how to spend their budget with the public annually. NCC is highways, transport, adult and children social services, planning such as quarries and larger concerns, and fire. He serves on the NCC and Pensions committee. The core work he does is at a parish level, and it is always important to remember that we are here to serve the people and we enjoy doing that as we are fortunate to be elected. The devolution process for the borough and county will take place in the next 18 months. He abstained from this vote as he didn't agree with postponing elections. He shared from NCC reports; demonstrated its commitment to road safety and maintenance leading the country in road repairs, Norfolk fits 92% of road repairs 2023/24 and tops consumer standards survey. Spring/summer road survey process started, the programme will treat 320 miles of roads this year, up from 280 miles last year. The treatment prevents potholes and provides a skid resistant surface. This will be mainly provided in high tourism areas costing around £12m NCC responsible for removing illegal goods from sale. Norfolk Fire fighters have been delivering support to Ukraine. He hoped that in their roles as Councillors that they do some good of what they are able to do. He alluded to a small disagreement in regard to a recent planning application with the wereham parish council and wished to assure all that he takes the PC point of view high on his list.

42/25 To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council on 10 March 2025 and Extraordinary Meeting 23 April 2025 to Note the Matters Arising Report

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council on 10 March 2025 and Extraordinary Meeting 23 April 2025 be approved. (Proposed: JWB, Seconded SB, all were in favour)

Matters Arising Report – May 2025

NCC confirmed for parish partnership fund 2024/25 – Work schedule Q1 2025/26 to resurface the pond footpath.

Parish Partnership Fund 2025/26 – The application was successful however Highways advised after the fact that they can only be purchased from Westcotec. The Clerk is awaiting a quote.

Highways Reports: Road breaking up/potholes on the A134 junction with The Row, and Wretton Road on 09.02.25. Sludge on the highways next to the pond grass. Fallen tree Playing Field and branch was cleared. A mph sign hit on Cavenham Road was reported for replacement. The Clerk reported signs in the village and along college road up to the Wissington Factory to be cleaned now the sugar beet season has finished. The Clerk is continuing to seek from Highways work to improve lighting/reflectors on A134 that is needed. Previously Highways agreed to resurface footpaths on The Row and A134 near the farm this is something the Clerk will continue to update with Highways, but it is likely on their longer-term programme.

Cemetery, The Row - Memorial Inspections – There were a few memorials that were deemed unsafe. Contact was made with those whom the Council has next of Kin records for the rest the Council will need to await contact. Those unsafe has been staked. Those responsible legally for the memorials must make them safe at their own expense.

Church Yard Trees – This work was pending September.

Conduit Project: The railings were installed by the Blacksmith Dean Hawes local to Wereham, it had transformed the conduit. The Clerk would continue to seek a contractor to include the date of refurb to the sign on the conduit. There was a small piece of plaster to repair at some point in the year.

Defibrillator – This was deployed and recommissioned in March, new pads ordered and replaced on the machine.

Cllr Annie Bruce – Resigned from service from 25th March 2025. The Clerk advertised the role as a result for 14 days. 10 Residents initiated the process whereby they apply to the Borough Council to fill this one vacancy via an Election. This was advertised on 29th April and is managed by the Borough Council. The Borough Council confirmed an election would cost upwards of £3k. This had since been uncontested.

Rewilding and Weed Spraying – The Clerk and the Chair confirmed with the grounds maintenance contractor to leave a section of the cemetery for rewilding. The grounds maintenance contractor confirmed that they would use an alternative product that complied with the BCKLWN's pollinator action plan. A sign is needed.

Cllr Jacki Hitching Memorial Tree – This was planted along Flegg Green common land mid-April by a contractor. A plaque needed to be arranged.

Streetlight Cavenham Road – Reported to the Clerk mid-April and sent to contractor for resolution. This had since been repaired by the contractor.

Flegg Green (Nowhere Lane) - The Contractor accidentally cut the verge (Highways) mid april. The Clerk informed them to check the area for arisings and not do in future. Residents advised that they look after the verge.

Planning Decisions (Consultation between meeting) 25/00457/CU Wereham Continued commercial use of swimming pool Northfield the Row Wereham King's Lynn Norfolk PE33 9AY. The Parish Council returned no comment on 26th March.

25/00457/CU Wereham Northfield the Row Wereham King's Lynn Norfolk PE33 9AY - Continued commercial use of swimming pool. Application permitted 1 May 2025. Application Permitted 1 May 2025 Delegated Decision

Planning Decisions (No Consultation)

25/00060/TREECA Wereham T1 Tulip Poplar - Fell tree that is close to a fence and overhangs neighbour's path and garage roof with potential to damage roof Tean 1 Church Road Wereham King's Lynn Norfolk PE33 9AP. No objection permitted. 30.04.25

Planning Application – Holme Oak

Response issued to the BCKLWN and confirmed for 30th April deadline objecting as per meeting on 23 April

Licence (No Consultation)

Was received and noted on email. Temporary Event Notice for an event within your Parish 24/01121/LA_TEN.

43/25 The Following Items Relate to Annual Meeting Year End Actions:

The Chair advised that the Council consider the following items on mase:

- a. To Approve Review of Financial Regulations. New model template NALC May 2025.
- b. To Approve Review of Standing Orders. New model template NALC May 2025.
- c. To Approve the Review of Data Protection Policy, Audit and Model Publication Scheme. No amendments.
- d. To Confirm the Review Annual Declaration of Interests. All Councillors had been asked by the Clerk to review this.
- e. To Approve Review of the Financial Risk Management Scheme 2025/26
- f. To Approve Review of the Assets, Register as at 31.03.25
- g. To Approve Annual Insurance Renewal 2025/26 £668.

RESOLVED: That items from 43/25 a. - g. be approved. (Proposed: JWB, Seconded SB, all were in favour)

- h. To Consider Representation on Pangle Charity

The Council agreed previously that Annie Dowe ex-councillor would sit on this charity as per their constitution. This position since her resignation was now vacant post of the Council. The Chair shared that as there were two new councillors plus two absent this would be deferred to the next meeting.

- i. To Approve Annual Accountability, Return and Governance Statement 2024/25 - Annual Statement of Accounts Section 1

The Clerk read out the statements on Section 1 of the AGAR which the Council responded to and it was marked all positively. The Clerk and Chair signed the document accordingly.

RESOLVED: That the Annual Accountability Return and Governance Statement 2024/25 Section 1 be approved. (Proposed: JWB, Seconded SC, all in favour).

- j. To Approve Rest of Annual Accountability, Return and Governance Statement 2024/25- Section 2

The Chair secondly asked the Council to approve the figures on the following document which includes acknowledgement of the internal auditor's report prepared by the Clerk and RFO. The Chair signed this document as a result of approval.

RESOLVED: That the Annual Accountability Return and Governance Statement 2024/25 - Section 2 be approved. (Proposed: JWB, Seconded SB, all were in favour).

44/25 Wereham Playing Field Rear Boundary

To approve any action in relation to the rear boundary of the playing field.

The Chair shared that a large branch had been moved by her husband. It was felt that the boundary over the other side of the field provided screening. The Grounds maintenance contract was up for renewal and review at the end of this year.

SB wasn't square, and overgrown but wanted to keep screening. BS shared that she enjoyed picking blackberries, it added biodiversity to the area concerned and it deterred children from entering the neighbouring fields.

The Chair shared that with these comments in mind the PC should monitor the situation and that it needed to be mindful of costs around ground maintenance.

45/25 Application to Use Wereham Playing Field

To consider approval of the application received to use the Playing field.

The Chair shared that the application was for a bouncy castle on the field as part of a wedding party later in the year. The Parish Council after discussion felt that unanimously due to liabilities risk and those who might use the field, that they could not approve the application. It was agreed that the form for hire be amended by the Clerk to state that the Parish Council does not permit bouncy castles. The council also noted that it had to consider people that live nearby

RESOLVED: That the application to hire the field for the use of a bouncy castle in August be rejected and the hire form be updated to include statement that the Parish Council does not allow bouncy castles as its policy. (Proposed: SC, Seconded JD, all were in favour).

46/25 Dog Bins

To consider approval of ongoing costs received from the Borough Council, frequency and Number.

The Borough Council had more than doubled the cost of emptying dog waste bins in February as part of their budget approvals after Parish Council's had set their budget. For Wereham this would be an increase from approximately £600 to £1300 per annum. It was agreed that the only way this could be mitigated at this time was to alter frequency of emptying from every week to every two weeks. The Council agreed to do this and should there be an issue to reconsider. It was noted that this could be switched to weekly if needed.

RESOLVED: That all dog waste bins in Wereham be emptied bi-weekly until further notice. (Proposed JWB; Seconded SB, all were in favour).

47/25 Bi-Monthly Health and Safety Inspection

To note and approve any actions identified in the inspection.

The Clerk conducted an inspection and there were no health and safety issues. There was a number of items that could be put together as a painting programme in the year. The Clerk agreed to enquire with the Community Payback team.

48/25 Register of Decisions

To approve the register of decision a) Extension of Budget of £1.7 k to cover cost of footpath resurfacing. The Council needs to approve this register of decision made between meetings

RESOLVED: That the register of decision a) Extension of Budget of £1.7 k to cover cost of footpath resurfacing. (Proposed: JWB, Seconded SB, all in favour).

49/25 Payments to Date and Review of Standing Orders and Direct Debits

To approve payments to date and arrangements for Standing Orders and Direct Debits

Payee	Service	Exc VAT	VAT	Inc VAT
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Parish Clerk	Wages, Expenses and Mileage (March and April)	772.98	0.00	772.98
HMRC	PAYE (March and April)	232.21	0.00	232.21
Wereham Village Hall	Hall Hire - April and May	34.00	0.00	34.00
Unity Trust Bank	Bank Charge (April, May)	12.00	0.00	12.00
Hodson Office Suppliers	Ink for Printer	56.98	11.40	68.38
Dean Hawes	Final Payment for Blacksmithing Work to Conduit Railings	2375.00	0.00	2375.00
HHA Ltd	Grounds Maintenance (PAID)	464.78	92.97	557.75
HHA Ltd	Grounds Maintenance	734.05	146.82	880.87
AM to PM Services	Tree Planting and Compost	48.00	0.00	48.00
Norfolk Wildlife Services	Survey Scots Pine St Margarets	175.30	35.06	210.36
Clear Councils	Insurance Fee	668.46	0.00	668.46
H Brett and Son	Memorial Inspections Cemetery	1100.00	220.00	1320.00
EWing Services	Annual Payroll Fee	160.00	32.00	192.00
SJA Pest Control	Mole Control Playing Field and Cemetery Jan - March 2025	60.81	0.00	60.81
Ward Gethin Solicitors	Land Advance, Searches for Files	260.00	46.40	306.40
Pearce and Kemp	Repair of Street Light Cavenham Rd	278.00	55.60	333.60
Internal Audit	2024/25 Accounts	20.00	0.00	20.00

RESOLVED: That the payments and standing orders and direct debits as presented be approved. (Proposed: JWB; Seconded SB, all were in favour).

50/25 Councillors' Concerns and Agenda Items for Next Meeting

To receive concerns and agenda items for the next meeting and forward work programme.

BS shared that she wondered if the Parish Council had any plans to hold a village fete. SC and JWB explained that Wereham Parish Council did not run these events as it would impact on the ability of the Church and the Village to do the same. BS explained that the Church was no longer able to hold its church fete due to low numbers of people involved to run and organise it. The Council discussed the fact that you need people to be able to run events and this was the main barrier to holding anything of this kind. The Chair shared that she was on the Wereham Open Gardens Committee and this year she was holding a Pimm's Tent in her garden for the event.

The rest of the Councillors had no concerns, matters or queries to raise.

51/25 Date of Next Meeting – Ordinary Meeting of the Wereham Parish Council Monday, 14 July 2025 at 6.45 pm in the Community Room, Wereham Village Hall.

This was noted, there was no public in attendance to leave at this point.

52/25 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC The Council will be requested to pass a resolution excluding the press and public from the meeting in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted as follows: To Consider/Approve Action in Relation to Access to Parish Responsible/Owned Land

The Parish Council discussed the issue and agreed that it would deal with the matter of parish council owned land itself and would issue correspondence to those concerned to confirm the ownership of the land in question.

Meeting Closed: 8.31 pm