

# Wickmere with Wolterton Parish

## ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2025

Minutes of the parish meeting held on Wednesday 12th March 2025  
at 7.00 pm in the Village Hall

1. Present:  
In Attendance - Lesley Ash (Chair), Richard Hembling, Phillida Hurn, George Madeley, Barry Markham  
Vicky Tovell (Clerk of the Council)
2. Apologies – were received from Vanessa Tomczynska
3. Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2024 were circulated, agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.
4. Annual Report from the Chair of the Parish Council - Lesley Ash
  - The chair introduced the new parish clerk, Vicky Tovell  
The chair gave her report as follows:
  - Orchid Signs – successful placing of signs observed by cutter tractor driver allowed orchids to seed. We hope to see the number of plants increase at this site.
  - The sale of council houses as they become vacant seems to be an unchanging policy from the Housing Association as they can build low-cost housing on urban sites more cheaply than keeping rural properties up to standards as standards rise.
  - Change of Management of the Village Hall: in order to comply with the terms of the lease we have had to place more responsibility on the Village Hall Management Committee. From now on they will be responsible for insurance, utilities, policies and safety, costs for which will be paid for from a grant by the Parish Council. These funds come from the precept it asks NNDC to allot from our council taxes. The VHMC will finance the day to day running and minor repairs from its funds and can apply for further funds from the Parish Council for any additional costs above its predicted outgoings.
  - Norfolk County Council will form a new unitary authority with Suffolk over the next 2-3 years. This is meant to save money by making a combined speciality cover a larger area with redundancies to 'head office' staff overseeing the workforces of the two counties. Redundant buildings can also be sold off, keeping the modern efficient buildings and selling off the less well maintained and expensive premises. This has been ordered by central government and will happen so be prepared for a somewhat chaotic change-over.
5. Annual Report from Village Hall Management Committee (VHMC) - Richard Hembling
  - The VHMC held their AGM in February and would welcome additional committee members and volunteers. Audited accounts for 2024-25 had been given to the Parish Council.
  - The VHMC reported that taking on and managing utilities, insurance, alongside the day to day running off the Village Hall, in line with the terms of the lease, is progressing well.
  - The VHMC put on several free community events over the year, which were well attended. It was looking to put on more in future, with the next events being planned for May, with a VE Day celebration and a Seed Sale.
6. Annual Parochial Church Council - Phillida Hurn
  - The PCC reported a successful year. The Harvest Breakfast and Christmas 'Service of Light' were both reasonably well attended and it is hoped to repeat these events.
  - The PCC thanked both regular donors and occasional donors for their ongoing support. They also thanked the Rectory owners for continuing to mow the grass.
  - The reconditioned church bell was back in place and the roof leading replaced after a theft.

- Phillida answered questions about reserves and reported the current account balance to be over £11,000 with a proportion reserved for maintaining the railings.

7. Aldbrough School – Richard Hembling

- Ofsted judged the school to be 'good' overall across all categories. Richard said this was due to excellent work by the Head and the whole team and wished to recognise the hard work from all involved.
- The school continues to be popular, with intake for Reception being 15 students listed as first choice, (compared to 19 last year), with 10 of those coming from out of catchment.

8. Open Forum

1) Clerk read aloud a report from Vanessa Tomczynska who attended an online Multi-Agency Flood and Drought Summit; as follows:

- A new bill, including an enforcement section, is being proposed, as they are aware of the present frustration involved in 'unlocking the bureaucracy'; (4 all-party Parliamentary groups, each with 20 MPs are involved).

The issue of water management is being taken very seriously and in order to undertake flood risk mapping it is important that local people provide information and feedback to NCC, who ask to be informed of any flooding that occurs in our parish, both inside properties or on our highways/roads.

Norfolk is ranked 8 of the worst affected counties in the UK. The emphasis was on prevention via long-term investment rather than 'just putting things right' after a local flood and there was an acknowledgement that the insurance industry needs to play its part as some farmers receive compensation whilst others don't. There was talk of a 'Toolkit' for Parishes from NCC - small things that local parishioners can do that can make a difference - and a need to effectively communicate the very real risks, whether your home has been flooded or not.

2) George Madeley reported North Norfolk MP, Steff Aquarone, had recently been visiting Wickmere residents, knocking on doors to ask for parishioners' views. All felt this was good to see and a worthwhile process to engage with.

9. Closure of the meeting –

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.30pm

Signed

Date