WICKHAM SKEITH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held on 11 May 2026 in Wickham Skeith Village Hall

Councillors Present: Harriet Bowes (HB) (Chair person,) Amanda Noller (AN) (Vice Chairperson) and Tamsin Little (TL), later joined by David Cleave (DC) and Sara Crabb (SC).

In Attendance : Tina Newell (TN) (Clerk), Rowland Warboys (RW) (District Councillor) and thirteen members of the public.

Harriet Bowes welcomed all to the meeting.

110526/01 **Election of Chairperson:** AN proposed HB as Chairperson seconded by TL; HB accepted the position as Chair person to Wickham Skeith Parish Council.

110526/02 HB duly signed the Declaration of Acceptance to Office as Chair Person of Wickham Skeith Parish Council.

110526/03 **Co-option:** With two vacancies and two applicants David Cleave (DC) and Sara Crabb (SC) were invited to join the Parish Council.

110526/04 DC and SC signed the Declaration of Acceptance to Office forms, countersigned by the Clerk, and joined the meeting as Parish Councillors.

110526/05 The Clerk confirmed official email accounts will be set up for both DC and SC and instructions to set these up will be sent soonest; a Register of Interest form will be emailed to these accounts for completing and returning to the District Council withing 28 days of taking office; copies of Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and the Code of Conduct will then be emailed to DC and SC as the 'working bibles' of the Parish Council.

110526/06 **Election of Vice Chairperson:** TL proposed AN as Vice Chair person seconded by HB. With all Councillors in agreement AN accepted the appointment as Vice Chair person to Wickham Skeith Parish Council.

110526/07 All Councillors noted further to the resignation of Richard Palmer (prior to the meeting) the Notice of Casual Vacancy has been displayed.

110526/08 **Apologies**: Councillors received apologies for absence from Thomas Rowe prior to the meeting.

110526/09 All Councillors voted and accepted apologies from TR.

110526/10 **Declarations:** There were no declarations of interest or dispensations to consider.

110526/11 **Minutes:** Councillors confirmed receipt of the draft minutes from the Parish Council meeting held on 2 March 2026 prior to the meeting and agreed they accurately reflect the decisions made at the meeting; HB was authorised to sign and date these as a true record (pages 22-27).

Public Forum:

110526/12 Councillors confirmed receipt of Rowland Warboy (RW) District Councillor's monthly report prior to the meeting; the full report is appended to these minutes.

110526/13 Councillors noted there was no report from Andrew Stringer (AS) County Councillor possibly due to his very recent re-election to the post.

110526/14 Councillors noted with disappointed there has been no communication from the new administration at the County Council.

110526/15 A villager spoke with concern over the seemingly lack of information regarding the recent 'call for sites' from the District Council; it was agreed to request an update from the District Councillor.

Planning:

110526/16 Councillors noted there have been no planning applications made to the District Council relating to Wickham Skeith since the last meeting.

110526/17 Councillors note there has been no determinations made by the District Council relating to Wickham Skeith since the last meeting.

110526/18 Councillors noted there had been no report detailing the advantages and disadvantages of owing The Grimmer, as a registered village green as promised at the last meeting. After discussion it was agreed to review the documentation held in the container at the village hall before contacting 'The Hold' to research historic minutes which may contain important decisions made from previous Parish Councillors in/around 2010.

Finance (all supporting paperwork appended):

110526/19 All Councillors confirmed receipt of the finance reports including bank reconciliations for the year ended 31 March 2026. DC as a non bank signatory will verify future finance reports but on this occasion it was taken as correct

that the bank statements agree to the bank reconciliation as presented; TN confirmed the total cash available £24,811.40; £3.49 in Barclays Premium, £0.00 (zero) in Barclays Community and Unity Savings with £24,807.91 in Unity Trust Current account.

110526/20 Councillors confirmed receipt of the budget to actual report and noted the £1,734.09 underspend on budget lines including wages and training and overspend of £13,011.44 on costs including advertising and broadband; with reserves spent of £6,768.59 (CIL) and £152.00 (defibrillator) and an increase in receipts of £2,911.34 there has been funding from general reserves of £1,435.42 for the year ended 31 March 2026.

110526/21 Councillors confirmed receipt of the reserves account. Noting the general reserve is £1,472.50 (25% of the Precept) and Proper Practices states that the generally accepted recommendation with regard to the appropriate minimum level of a Smaller Authority's General Reserve is between three and twelve months Net Revenue Expenditure (NRE) Wickham Skeith Parish Council currently have three months worth of NRE and are therefore working within Proper Practise.

110526/22 Councillors agreed the asset register reflects all assets owned by the Parish Council at the current time at a cost of £15,764.

110526/23 Councillors confirmed receipt of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Form as required by the District Council (in accordance with the CIL Regulations) prior to the meeting and resolved to adopt it; HB signed the form.

110526/24 Noting the two new Councillors it was agreed to defer the bank reconciliation for the period ended 30 April 2026 to the next meeting to allow all Councillors time to review and understand the reconciliation and associated reports.

Councillors noted the following receipts since the last meeting:

110526/25	50% of annual Precept	District Council	£3,636.22
110526/26	HMRC	2025/26 VAT return	£1,687.49

Councillors ratified the following payments made outside of a meeting confirming invoices had been verified:

110526/27	HMRC	Tax & NIC	£275.67
110526/28	BT	Broadband	£44.13

110526/29	Tina Newell	Remuneration	£288.23
110526/30	Unity	Monthly bank fee	£7.00
110526/31	BT	Broadband	£43.48
110526/32	Barclays	Interest charged	£0.65

Councillors approved the following payments confirming all invoices have been received

110526/33	Suffolk Preservation Society	Neighbourhood Plan Workshop	£10.00
110526/34	SALC	Annual subscription	£210.52
110526/35	Pear Space	Website hosting	£120.00
110526/36	Town & Country Printer	Noticeboard printing	£93.60
110526/37	Hellis & Lodge	2025 Audit Fee	£130.00
110526/38	Trevor Brown	2026 Audit Fee	£244.48

110526/39 After a brief discussion it was resolved to add SC to the Unity Trust Bank mandate; this would result in HB, AN, TL and SC being bank signatories.

Governance:

110526/40 All Councillors accepted the Internal Auditors report for the year ended 31 March 2026 noting the Council maintains an effective framework of financial administration and internal financial control whilst demonstrating many examples of good practice.

110526/41 Councillors approved the Annual Governance Statements section one of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Statement (AGAR) for the year ended 31 March 2026 in turn confirming the Parish Council have a sound system of internal control. It was resolved for HB and TN to sign Section One of the AGAR with those present at the meeting as witness.

110526/42 All Councillors approved the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2026 as transposed on section two of the AGAR in turn confirming the statements present the financial position of Wickham Skeith Parish Council for the year ended 31 March 2026. HB signed section 2 of the AGAR at the meeting noting TN as RFO had signed prior to the meeting.

110526/43 All Councillors accepted to certify Wickham Skeith Parish Council as exempt from a limited assurance review for the year ended 31 March 2026 and complete the Certificate of Exemption.

110526/44 All Councillors agreed the dates for public inspection of the accounts will be from Tuesday 3 June 2025 up to and including Monday 14 July 2025 and agreed to display the notice on line and on the Parish noticeboards.

110526/45 All Councillors resolved to adopt the Standing Orders as presented with no amendments.

110526/46 It was agreed by all Councillors to adopt the Financial Regulations noting there have been no amendments.

110526/47 Councillors agreed to abide by the Code of Conduct and adopted these with no changes to the model.

110526/48 All Councillors reviewed the Staffing Committee Terms of Reference and agreed to accept them with no amendments

Councillors resolved to appoint members to the following positions positions/working groups:

110526/49 Asset management - DC

110526/50 Biodiversity - HB and one resident

110526/51 Community Emergency Plan - AN

110526/52 Community Infrastructure Levy – TL, TR and SC

110526/53 Neighbourhood Plan – HB and TR

110526/54 Road safety – SC, DC and TL.

110526/55 It was agreed to advertise the above working groups and invite residents to join as appropriate.

110526/56 After consideration all Councillors agreed to the continuation of annual subscriptions to Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC) noting the payment was approved earlier in the meeting (£210.52) and Community Action Suffolk (CAS) (no charge).

110526/57 Correspondence: none

110526/58 Councillors requested the following matters for inclusion on a future agenda: Highways update re solutions to speeding traffic.

110526/59 Noting the availability of the village hall it was resolved to set the following dates for future meetings: 8 June, 6 July, 7 September, 9 November, 11 January, 8 March, 12 April and 10 May (Annual meetings); HB agreed to book these with the hall.

110526/60 All Councillors resolved to exclude members of the Press & Public (Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, Section 1(2), in conjunction with Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972) due to the confidential staffing matters to be discussed.

110526/61 All members of the press and public left the meeting.

110526/62 Councillors accepted the reluctant resignation of Tina Newell as Parish Clerk prior to the meeting.

110526/63 Following two applications all Councillors agreed to offer Karen Lillistone the position of Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer starting 01 June 2026 at SSP 13 for five hours a week. It was agreed to pay TN a maximum of ten hours to ensure a smooth hand over.

110526/64 HB closed the meeting at 21.12.