

MARKET WESTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Market Weston Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 21st May 2026 7.00pm in Market Weston Village Hall.

Present: Cllrs: P Barham, P Freeman, M Martin, A Hall, West Suffolk District Council (WSDC) Cllr C Bull & Suffolk County Council (SCC.) Cllr H Richardson

1. Election of Chair

Cllr Barham proposed Cllr Martin for the position of Chair. This was seconded by Cllr Freeman. Cllr Martin accepted the position of Chair.

2. Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Cllr Martin completed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form.

3. Election of Vice Chair

Cllr Martin proposed Cllr Barham for the position of Vice Chair. This was seconded by Cllr Freeman. Cllr Barham accepted the position of Chair.

The Parish Council expressed their gratitude to the outgoing Chair, Darryl Fulcher. Darryl Fulcher made the decision to stand down as a councillor. His input and dedication to the Council over many years is greatly appreciated. Darryl joined the Parish Council in May 2011 and was elected to the position of Chair in 2018. The Clerk will write to Mr Fulcher to express our sadness at his resignation and to thank him for all his hard work and dedication over the years.

The Clerk will ensure that WSDC are notified of the above decision and ensure that the vacancy is advertised in the correct manner.

Action Clerk

5. To elect Council Officers and Representatives to outside bodies

Cllr Martin will continue to be the Parish Councils representative on the Village Hall Committee.

Cllr Barham will take over responsibility for the defibrillator management. The Clerk will make the necessary arrangements to set up Cllr Barham on the Webnos account to enable him to carry out the necessary checks.

Action Clerk

6. Members Declarations of Interest and Dispensations:

6.1 To receive declarations of interest from councillors on items on the agenda. None.

6.2 To receive written requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interests. None.

6.3 To grant dispensations as appropriate under Section 33 of the Localism Act. N/A

7. **Minutes - Minutes** - The minutes of the Thursday 19th March 2026 meetings were agreed, approved and signed as a correct record.

8. Meeting open to the public

No members of the public present.

9. Report from County Councillor: Harry Richardson

Newly elected SCC Councillor, Harry Richardson, introduced himself to the members present. He feels he has big shoes to fill, following on from SCC Cllr Spicer who has retired after 37 years in post. The new Cabinet has been set up at SCC, there is not a lot of policy detail at the moment, but that will come in time. The new Cabinet is challenging the old Cabinets three Unity Model. The Local Government Review, showing the three unitary areas is now live. The area Market Weston sits in is relatively unchanged. The Councillors welcomed Cllr Richardson and look forward to working with him. The issues with the junction at the B1111 and The Street will be shared with Cllr Richardson.

10. Report from B. Councillor: C Bull

Cllr Bull provided an annual report, which is available in full, in the Annual Parish Meeting minutes. Cllr Bull highlighted a couple of points from her report. Better recycling: This is a nationwide scheme to help improve recycling and is particularly important for us as Suffolk has one of the worst recycling rates in the country. It is hoped that this initiative will create a more environmentally conscious society where more items can be recycled and reused. The new legislation aims to enhance recycling rates and encourage a more consistent national approach to recycling across England. Under the changes, launching this June in West Suffolk, residents will be able to recycle glass, cartons, and plastic film and bags from the kerbside for the first time. Food waste will also be collected separately each week. Residents across West Suffolk will receive new green-lidded recycling bins and two food waste caddies in preparation for the new Better Recycling service. Deliveries of almost 80,000 recycling bins started from Monday 23 February and this month we started delivering nearly 160,000 caddies to households across the district. Council elections: Cllr Bull reported that Suffolk County Council elections were still held this May but the District Council elections due in May 2027 have been postponed with sitting councillors continuing an extra year. These councils will continue to operate alongside the shadow authorities but be abolished when the new Unitaries are formally established on April 1st 2028. So from a District Council point of view we will have Cllr Bull as our councillor for another two years and it will be work as usual. Concerns have been raised about a potential traveller's site at Wattisfield. Cllr Bull will investigate this matter further and report back to the Council any findings.

11. To receive any report from the Chair

The Chair has been approached by a resident about the condition of the memorial bench, for the late Guy Hatten, on The Green. It needs to be cleaned and re-teaked. Cllr Hall will make arrangements to clean the bench and Cllr Freeman will arrange to re-teak it. Cllr Martin will let the resident know that work will be carried out to restore the bench. Any expenses incurred will be reimbursed at the next meeting.

Actions Cllrs Hall/Freeman/Martin

12. To report any report from the Clerk

12.1 To receive feedback from Clerks unplugged session/WSDC Planning training..

At the Clerks unplugged session, there were discussions about data protection and, it is being strongly recommended, that the Clerk has a device (Laptop/PC) for each of her parishes. The Councillors felt that this would be unnecessary as it should be possible to set up individual cloud storage, which could be accessed off one device. There will still undoubtedly be an expense connected to this, but it would be far less than the purchase of a separate laptop. It was agreed that we should factor this in when looking at the budget moving forward.

The Clerk attended some Planning training, hosted by WSDC. It was an interesting session. Topics covered included: the new Local Plan process, which is commencing in June 2026. It was noted that there is an increase in new housing number requirements from 765 to 1200 annually. S106 monies/CIL contributions were also discussed. As well as planning enforcement. The Planning Enforcement Team are guided by Town and Country Planning act 1990 and operate on an assumption to approve. It was noted that there is a different attitude from residents now, with advances in social media and access to information, meaning that residents often use the laws available, to delay planning challenges, which can prove to be costly for the Council.

13. The Green/Play area report

In addition to the condition of the bench (see under item 11) the gate, off New Common Road is reported to be in a poor condition. Cllr Freeman will speak to Pat Murrany to see what can be done. We will include this as an agenda item for the next meeting.

Action Cllr Freeman/Clerk

The Clerk confirmed that a grant for £1,100 has been received from WSDC, this is for works to the basket swing and surface.. The Clerk has confirmed acceptance of the grant with WSDC. It was noted that the grant needs to be used, solely for the delivery of the Project, by the 30th of September 2026. The Parish Council were grateful for this award and will make the necessary arrangements for the work, included in the application, to be undertaken within this time frame.

Action Clerk

Following WSDC decision to reduce the frequency of their inspections, and discussions at the last meeting, The Clerk has produced a rota and equipment checklist for The Green. The Clerk will share these with Cllr Barham who will make them live documents, to be shared with the Councillors for completion.

Action Cllr Barham/Clerk

Cllr Martin will check with Stephen Hatten the status of our original mower. Cllr Barham will look at getting the current mower serviced – a amount of up to £300 was agreed for this work. Cllr Barham will look at options to have the mower serviced on a regular basis. A schedule for maintenance, and an associated budget will be discussed moving forward.

Action Cllr Martin/Barham/Clerk

It was noted that some of the trees on The Green have an infestation of caterpillars and webs. They are covering all the bird cherry trees as well as the ground. We understand them to be Ermine Moth caterpillars which although may strip the tree, are harmless and no action is required.

14. Village matters

14.1 To discuss any highways issues.

There were reports of some pot holes in Ponds End Lane and New Common Road. These will be reported via the SCC reporting portal.

14.2 To receive any update on the Speed Device.

The device seems to be working well in its current location. Downloading the data is proving to be a bit of an issue at the moment, but Cllrs Barham and Freeman will continue to work on this.

Action Cllrs Barham/Freeman

14.3 To receive update on new dog bin.

Cllr Barham has put up the post for the new dog bin. The Councillors expressed their appreciation for this..

14.4 To receive any feedback on condition of footpath in The Street.

A request made to WSDC to have the footpath, in The Street, edged back. We have been advised that SCC would edge the path back, as they have done in the past along the A143. We will keep a watching eye on this to ensure the work is carried out.

Action All

14.5 To receive update on street sweeper visit.

The Clerk has been informed that WSDC scheduling is showing that they are due to be back into Market Weston with the road sweeper in June. Again, we will keep a watching eye on this to ensure the work is carried out.

Action All

14.6 Traffic calming options for B1111

The Clerk has been in contact with SCC regarding possible traffic-calming measures on the B1111. SCC has advised that "SLOW" road markings are already in place adjacent to the junction warning signs. The Parish Council has been asked to consider whether any existing road markings or signs require renewal, for example if they have become faded, obscured, damaged, or twisted.

In addition, SCC could investigate replacing the current warning signs with yellow-backed warning signs. These are more conspicuous to drivers and highlight a recognised safety concern. SCC has indicated that there is sufficient collision data at this location to support the installation of yellow-backed signs, subject to approval from their Asset Management Team.

There would be a cost associated with any of the above works. The Clerk will contact Andrew Moore, who has recently been reassigned to our area, to investigate the available options and provide indicative costings.

Action Clerk

15. Finance-Compliance-Policies

15.1 The Following accounts were approved/noted.

Dog bin	Payment	Office Needs Direct	-£186.00
Clips for Speed indicator	Payment	Phil Barham	-£21.07
Bank charges	Payment	Unity Trust Bank	-£7.00
Mower Fuel	Payment	Phil Barham	-£61.36
Staff costs	Payment	Various	-£1,365.88
Play area grant	Receipt	West Suffolk Grant	£1,100.00
Precept	Receipt	West Suffolk	£11,200.00

15.1.1 To receive Budget Report, Bank Reconciliation and Schedule of Transactions.

The Clerk provided the Councillors with a bank reconciliation, schedule of payments and a budget report for information. The budget report shows a comparison between budgeted and actual income and expenditure.

Cllr Freeman carried out the additional accounts check at the meeting and the Chair signed the agreed schedule of payments.

15.2 To following documents were reviewed, updated where required the following and agreed:

(i) [Councillor Code of Conduct](#). (ii) [Financial Regulations](#). (iii) [Standing Orders](#). (iv) [Document review schedule](#). (v) [Asset Register](#). (vi) Clerks contract.

15.3 End of Year Accounts, to include the Annual Governance Return (AGAR).

15.3.1 To receive the Annual Internal Audit Report and discuss the report of the Internal Auditor, SALC and note any recommendations made.

The accounts were found to be in good order and complaint with current regulations. There were some recommendations/comments made.

There were some recommendations made. These included:

(i) The removal of [] brackets in the Financial Regulations and making sure these are adapted to the needs of the council. The Clerk felt that we were compliant already with this but would double check and make any updates required.

Action Clerk

(ii) To ensure transparency in the budgetary process Council might wish to evidence by recording within the minutes, the budget being set along side the reasoning for such a budget. This has already been actioned for the 2026-27 budget.

(iii) That the council should consider either reporting, in accordance with its own standing order 17c a quarterly statement showing evidence of comparisons between budgeted and actual income and expenditure to form the basis of approval for virements or amending Standing Order 17c to reflect the frequency with which budget monitoring exercises are carried out. The Clerk will make this change to show that we try to do a comparison at each meeting, or at least quarterly.

Action Clerk

(iv): A refund (£149.97) has been entered as a receipt which is incorrect. The refund should be entered as a negative payment to reverse the payment that was made and to reduce expenditure. Entering the refund as receipt results in overstated income and expenditure. After speaking to the auditor the Clerk has changed Certificate of Exemption and section 2 to reflect this and has also uploaded to SALC portal a copy of the updated documents.

Action Clerk

(v) It was suggested that the council might wish to ensure that the cashbook and/or minutes make reference to the powers used to incur expenditure. It was agreed to identify the use of S137 in the minutes. We state, in our internal Audit Control document, that we will record powers for non-standard expenditure only and are content to continue with this arrangement.

Action Clerk

(vi) Council might wish to consider further policies detailing the procedures to be followed for dealing with subject access; freedom of information requests and procedures for dealing with data breaches. We have comprehensive FOI policies, data breaches are included in our It Policy, but we might want to consider expanding on this. **Action Clerk**

(vii) Council should consider reviewing the website accessibility statement more frequently as it does not reflect the outcome of the test that was completed and reported on at the full council meeting on 19 March 2026 (min ref: 8.3) This will be added to our Policy Review Schedule. **Action Clerk**

15.3.2 To approve and sign section one, Annual Governance statement, of the AGAR 2025-26
Section one of the AGAR 2025-26 was agreed, approved and signed by the Chair and Clerk.

15.3.3 To approve and sign section two, Accounting Statement, of the AGAR 2025-26.
Section two of the AGAR 2025-26 was agreed, approved and signed by the Chair and Clerk.

15.3.4 To accept and sign the Certificate of exemption 2025-26 for submission to the external auditor.

The Certificate of exemption 2025-26 was agreed, approved and signed by the Chair and Clerk. This will be sent to the External Auditor within the timeframe allowed.

15.3.5 To note actions to be taken to be compliant with the Publication Requirements – Transparency Code.

The Clerk will ensure the Publication - Transparency Code requirements are met by ensuring the documents/notices required, by the Accounts and Audit Regulation 2015, the Local Audit (Smaller authorities) Regulations 2015, and the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities are published/uploaded, within the required timeframe.

15.4 To note compliance with The Pension Regulator.

The Clerk confirmed that, On 27 April 2026, a completed re-declaration of compliance for Market Weston Parish Council was received by The Pensions Regulator under the Pensions Act 2008 (or, for Northern Ireland, the Pensions Order 2008).

15.5 To note End of Year Pension submission to SCC

The Clerk confirmed that she has completed and submitted the end of year return to the SCC Pension Scheme as required.

15.6 To receive update on current insurance policy.

Cllr Barham was satisfied with the cover/repayment arrangements as discussed at the last meeting. Cllr Barham will do a comparison between cover held and the items covered and share ahead of the meeting the renewal is due.. It was agreed that we pay the additional, pro-rata amount of up to £35.56. to cover the War memorial (£35,000) and SID (3,000) from now until the renewal on 1st October 2026. The Clerk will contact the insurance company for an up to date quote and will raise the payment. This payment will be ratified at the next meeting. **Action Cllr Barham/Clerk**

16. Planning Matters to include any applications/decisions received since the agenda was posted.

16.1 To note Barningham Neighbourhood Plan Basic Conditions Statement Addendum consultation – 23rd April 2026 (9am) to 8th May 2026 (5pm) Noted.

17. Councillors reports and items for future agendas

Cllr McNeill has asked for The Green Management Plan to be included on the next agenda. As noted above (item 13) the condition of the bench, gate and the implementation of a maintenance plan for the Mower, will be included on the next agenda.

18. Correspondence for information/action

18.1 Wellbeing Suffolk, request for information.

We have been contacted by a Wellbeing Engagement Worker with Wellbeing Suffolk. They are looking to connect with any local men's groups or older persons groups in the local area to promote the support available through Wellbeing Suffolk. It was noted that there was a Men's Breakfast at Hopton.

18.2 WSDC Consultation on Pavement licences

WSDC has written to let us know about a change to the cost of pavement licences for businesses in our area such as cafes, restaurants and pubs. West Suffolk Council has agreed to trial scheme designed to provide up to £1.2m of additional support to our town centres. Part of this is enabling them to drop the pavement licence application fee from £500 to £100 across West Suffolk.

18.3 WSDC Civic Service invitation.

The Chair of West Suffolk Council, Councillor Peter Armitage has issued an invitation to join him for his Civic Service in St Edmundsbury Cathedral on Sunday 28 June 2026 at 3.30pm.

19. Aide memoire

19.1 Tree planting project, Cllr Hall.

19.2 Flooding issues, Cllr Hall.

20. Date of next meetings: Thursday 16th July 2026 7.00pm Market Weston Village Hall.