

MARKET WESTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Market Weston Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 13th November 2025 7.00pm in Market Weston Village Hall.

Present: Cllrs: D Fulcher, P Barham, P Freeman, M Martin & West Suffolk District Council (WSDC) Cllr C Bull.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received and agreed/noted by the Councillors from: D McNeill, A Hall & Suffolk County Council (SCC.) Cllr J Spicer.

2. Members Declarations of Interest and Dispensations:

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

2.2 To receive written requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interests. None received.

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

3. Meeting Open to the Public

Two residents attended the meeting to discuss their concerns about the speed of vehicles travelling along the B1111, particularly at the crossroads with Hollow Road and The Street. As this issue was already on the agenda (item 10.4), the Chair agreed to bring it forward.

The residents, who have lived in the village for 40 years, reported that traffic speed on the B1111 has worsened and that they have witnessed three accidents in the past year. Councillors agreed that the situation is a cause for concern. It was noted that cutting back the hedge bordering The Rectory would improve visibility for motorists both on the B1111 and at the junction with The Street. However, responsibility for the hedge is unclear, as it may be on land owned by SCC. Cllr Martin will speak to the residents of The Rectory about arrangements for having the hedge cut back. The Clerk will contact Cllr Spicer to explore further measures to help reduce vehicle speeds at this junction.

Action Cllr Martin/Clerk

4. Minutes - to minutes of the Thursday 18th September 2025 meeting were agreed, approved and signed as a correct record.

5. Report from County Councillor (SCC): J Spicer.

Cllr Spicer was unable to attend the meeting and sent the following report:

A143 – SCC deciding what needs to be done after the poor quality re-surfacing – meanwhile a 40 mph in place.

B1111 open again at Stanton.

Proposals for the Norfolk and Suffolk Mayor now all agreed (Devolution) with elections next May. No news on unitary authorities.

6. Report from West Suffolk district Council (WSDC). Councillor: C Bull.

Cllr Bull reported that the business case for a three-unitary arrangement from West Suffolk District Council, has been submitted to Central Government for consideration A decision regarding the Governments preferred option will be made early next year. Cllr Bull will share some information about the Warm Spaces funding with Cllr Martin, to pass on to the village Hall.

Action Cllrs Bull/Martin

7. Progress reports from Chair

There were no additional reports received from the Chair.

8. To receive any progress report from Clerk:

8.1 To receive feedback from SCC briefing on the Local Government Re-organisation One Suffolk business case and note Clerks intention to attend the SALC 'focus on Devolution' forum. The Clerk asked a number of questions at the SCC One Suffolk briefing. Details of these questions and answers can be obtained from the Clerk on request. It was however noted that these responses are contingent with Central Government adopting the One Council model as being proposed by Suffolk County Council. The Clerk intends to join the SALC 'focus on Devolution' forum in December.

8.2 To receive any feedback form the West Suffolk District Town and Parish Conference. The conference was both interesting and informative covering the new arrangements for recycling and giving a brief overview of planning objectives, with the promise of some dedicated planning sessions to be arranged.

8.3 To discuss any requirements for The Care Directory 2026. As it has been sometime since we have received a copy of this directory, it was agreed that we should request 100 copies. This will enable us to deliver a copy to each household in the village.

Action Clerk

8.4 To note Clerks' intention to attend 'Clerk's unplugged Safeguarding session' 27th November. Noted.

9. The Green/Play area report

9.1 To receive any update on the continuing maintenance of The Green. No additional report received.

9.2 To receive information about insurance cover for volunteers working on The Green. Following on from the discussion at the last meeting, it was noted that volunteers and councillors are covered to use the hedge cutter, provided they have had the proper training, are competent to do so and have the appropriate PPE if needed. It was understood the cost of training is in the region of £200. We will contact Neil Hatten to see if has had or would like to undertake the training. We will also ask if he has any insurance that would cover him if he were to cut the hedge. In the meantime we will investigate the cost of having the hedge cut by a contractor. **Action Clerk**

10. Village matters

10.1 To discuss any highways issues. There were no additional highway matters raised.

10.2 To receive any update on the Speed Device Project. We were given a 14-week lead time for the installation of the post for the speed device on 14 July 2025, which should have brought the completion date to 20 October. We are now at week 17. Despite several attempts, the Clerk has been unable to make contact with the SCC Speed Team. The Clerk will now contact Cllr Spicer to request her assistance in securing an installation date.

Action Clerk

10.3 To receive any update on project to add a name to the War Memorial. The name, Arthur Driver has been successfully added to the War Memorial, with the work being completed before the Remembrance Day Service. Thanks were made to Cllr Freeman for heading up this project. Cllr Bull said she would look to see if she is able to make a contribution towards the cost of this project. The Clerk will contact Cllr Spicer to see if she might also be able to make a contribution. So far the Clerk has been unsuccessful in obtaining a replacement cost for the War Memorial, to inform the insurance provider. She will continue to pursue this. **Action Clerk**

10.4 To receive request, from local resident, to reduce speed limit to 30 mph, along the B1111 See under item3, meeting open to the public.

10.5 To receive a proposal, from a local resident, to extend the 30mph zone in Church Road. A resident has written to express their concerns about the speed of vehicles traveling along Church Road, within the 60 mph limit. At present, the unrestricted speed limit includes a blind bend, and no footpath so that pedestrians have to leap onto rough banks to avoid being run over. This happened to the resident very recently and was followed by abuse from the driver. As a new footpath now exists directly into the hedge on this part of Church Road, the route from the safety of the church footpath to this new path is very dangerous as there is nowhere to stand safely, especially if pushing a buggy or walking with a child or a dog. Their proposal is to make the entire length of Church Road into a 30mph limit by moving the current sign closer to the Hopton end junction with the B1111. In principle the Councillors all supported this idea, but are aware that the costs of this might be prohibitive. The Clerk will contact Cllr Spicer to discuss this request and it will be included again as an agenda item for the next meeting. In the meantime it was hoped that once operational, the new speed device, which will be deployed in Church Road, might help reduce speeds in this area. The Clerk will contact the resident to update them on the situation.

Action Clerk

10.6 To discuss concerns raised about the dog bin near St Mary's Church and review recent changes to bin arrangements.

A complaint has been received about the overflowing dog bin near the church. Unfortunately there was a delay in receiving the replacement bin bags for the bin, which meant the bin went some time before being emptied. The bags have now been received and Cllr Barham has emptied the bin. It would appear the lid on the bin is missing, this means in wet weather the bin collects water, which adds to the weight of the bin bag and makes emptying the bin difficult. The Clerk will look at options for a replacement bin, with a lid and report back at the next meeting. The Clerk will contact the resident to update them on the situation.

Action Clerk

10.7 To receive feedback on the Rest Centre training and re-visit the production of an Emergency Plan.

Cllr McNeil and the Clerk attended a training session for running emergency rest centres. This was very poorly presented and we gained very little from the 2½ hours spent there. Two points for consideration were identified, when considering our own plan: Does our insurance cover need to be changed, to support the use of a rest centre, or is already adequate. Do we need to include a caveat about pets, being allowed into the rest centre, in the plan. A new, updated plan template has been provided. The Clerk will share this with the Councillors, in a tracked word document, so everyone can add information to populate the document.

Action Clerk/All

11. Finance- Policies-Compliance.

11.1 the following accounts were noted/approved for payment:

Insurance	Payment	Gallagher	-£411.45
Royal British Legion donation	Payment	Royal British Legion	-£50.00
Accounts software	Payment	Mijan	-£84.00
contribution Grant training	Payment	Barningham PC	-£7.20
Admin payments	Payment	Various	-£908.25
Grant and defib running costs	Payment	MWVH	-£320.00
Grant towards grounds maint.	Payment	MWPCC	-£350.00
bank charges	Payment	Unity Trust Bank	-£6.00
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TAX collected by HMRC	Payment	HMRC	-£468.56
Refund for removed dog bin	Receipt	West Suffolk other	£149.97
interest	Receipt	Unity Trust Bank	£136.56
VAT repayment	Receipt	HMRC VAT	£697.67
Website hosting	Receipt	CAS	-£66.00

A donation of £320 was agreed for the Village Hall, this includes £20 towards the electricity costs for the defibrillator cabinet, as agreed last year.

A donation of £350 was made to the Church for a grant towards grounds maintenance.

The schedule of payments was signed by the Chair.

The additional accounts check was carried out by Cllr Fulcher at the meeting.

11.2 Bank reconciliation and schedule of payments.

The Clerk provided a bank reconciliation and budget report for information

11.3 To discuss, agree and adopt IT Policy to ensure compliance with audit obligations.

The Clerk had prepared an IT Policy. This was discussed and agreed for adoption.

11.4 To discuss website audit to ensure compliance with audit requirements.

Cllr Barham will carry out the check, on the website, to ensure we are complaint with current regulations.

Action Cllr Barham

11.5 To discuss the use of .Gov email address for Councillors.

It was agreed that at this time we would only have a dedicated .Gov email address for the Clerk but we would make allowance in the budget for the future cost of a .gov email address for all councillors, in anticipation of it becoming compulsory in the future. It was further agreed that the only email address available in the public domain would be the Clerks. The Clerk will update the website to reflect this.

Action Clerk

11.6 To note cancellation of penalty notice, HMRC. Noted.

11.7 To discuss and agree budget for 2026-27. The following budget was agreed for 2026/27

Administration

Employment costs	£6,437.00
Office expenses	£415.00
Bank charges	£72.00
.Gov website email	£308.00
Hall Hire	£167.00
Insurance	£468.00
subscription	£167.67
Audit	£228.00
Software	£88.00
Training	£100.00
Emergency Plan	£100.00
Total Administration	£8,550.67

grants

Grant MWWH & PCC grounds	£730.00
S137	£52.00
Total grants	£782.00

Village maintenance

Dog waste bins	£0.00
Defibrillator	£170.00
War memorial	£100.00
Speed Indicator	£0.00
General village maintenance	£100.00
Total Village maintenance	£370.00

Other Payments

Miscellaneous	£150.00
Total Other Payments	£150.00

The Green

The Green	£1,347.33
Total The Green	£1,347.33

Total Payments	£11,200.00
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Please note: This is an anticipated budget, and expenditure may be allocated to items not explicitly listed, provided it is lawful and properly authorised by the full council.

11.8 To discuss and agree Precept request for 2026-27

Following the budget working party meeting and further discussion at the Parish Council meeting, it was agreed that we would precept for £11,200 for 2026/27. This precept will represent a 9.99% increase on last years precept, which represents an additional £9.50, per year on a band D property This allows for an overall increase of approx. 5% on costs and factors in a budget to include amounts towards additional costs incurred to remain compliant with audit obligations, and a contingency, as discussed at previous meetings, towards items including village maintenance - including war memorial costs, bench and village sign maintenance/repairs as well as continuing to build The Green reserves. This decision was not taken lightly but it was felt necessary to ensure we could continue to meet our financial obligations. The Parish Council are conscious of the potential cost of replacing the mower, or being forced to pay a contractor in the future to continue to maintain the Green at the standard it is currently being maintained at. We are currently reliant on the good will of Councillors and local residents cutting the Green, and the future of this cannot be guaranteed. Please also see under 14.2 West Suffolk Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

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

12.1 To note WSDC has approved application DC/25/1176/LB, Chapel Cottage Church Road

12.2 To note request for information regarding available building plots in the village.

The Clerk received a request from someone currently stationed overseas, who are exploring options for purchasing land in the village with the aim of building a home for their retirement. They are particularly looking at land owned by Suffolk County Council (SCC) The Clerk replied to say that she was not aware of any parcels of land available that could be purchased for development. With regard the areas under SCC ownership, she informed them that they would need to contact SCC directly for further information regarding this..

13. Councillors reports and items for future agenda

No additional reports or requests received.

14. Correspondence for information/action

14.1 WSDC Community Governance Review information. Noted, no action to be taken.

14.2 Consultation on Proposed Changes to the West Suffolk Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2026 to 2027.

West Suffolk Council are currently consulting on some proposed changes to the West Suffolk Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS). This would see a decreased contribution rate of up to a maximum discount of 100% for working-age customers, which gives support for low-income households and those facing financial hardship, in light of the current pressures on the cost of living. Noted.

14.3 West Suffolk Civic Carol Service invitation. Noted.

14.4 To receive request for funding from East Anglian Air Ambulance. Noted.

14.5 WSDC Christmas bank holiday bin collection changes. Noted.

14.6 WSDC postal vote update.

WSDC has written to share that residents who applied for their postal vote on or before 31 January 2024 and wish to continue with this arrangement will need to reapply for their postal vote before 31 January 2026. Noted, information to be shared.

15. Aide memoire 15.1 Tree planting project, Cllr Hall. 15.2 Flooding issues, Cllr Hall.

16. Date of next meetings:

Date of next meeting, Extraordinary meeting Monday 24th November 2025 6pm and then Thursday 15th January 2026, 7pm, both to be held in the Village Hall

17. To consider the exclusion of the public and press in the public interest for consideration of the following items:

17.1 Personnel Issues. None. 17.2 Legal Issues. None.