

MARKET WESTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Market Weston Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 10th September 2026 7.00pm in Market Weston Village Hall.

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

1. Apologies

Apologies were received, and the reason given accepted, and approved by the Councillors from: Cllr P Barham.

2. Members Declarations of Interest and Dispensations:

2.1 To receive declarations of interest from councillors on items on the agenda. Although not listed as an agenda item a planning application DC/26/1188/HH for Liberty House was received after the agenda was posted. Cllr Snelling declared an interest in this item.

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

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

3. Minutes - The minutes of the Thursday 30th July 2026 meeting were agreed, approved and signed as a correct record.

4. Meeting Open to the Public

One member of the public present, see under Cllr Richardsons report.

5. Report from County Councillor (SCC): H Richardson.

A143 The surface dressing and 'LockChip' have now been completed, which represents the permanent repairs to the road surface after it repeatedly failed over the summer. The temporary speed limits remain in situ for the time being to ensure the new surface settles; Highways will return at a later date to reinstall the white lines. There was some confusion regarding the closure signage during this period. Cllr Richardson is a member of the A143 Blackbourn Resilience Group, which was established to work with Suffolk County Council (SCC) to identify ways of minimising the impact of road closures along the A143 on the neighbouring villages in his ward. The outcomes of these meetings have been mixed. The group has expressed disappointment at the lack of communication with parish councils, which can have a significant impact when road closures are implemented, and is looking at ways to improve this. A further meeting is hopefully due to take place by the end of October. In the meantime, the road was closed again following an accident involving a lorry that had left the road. It appears that some damage was caused to the carriageway during the recovery of the vehicle. A member of the public came to express concerns about the safety at the junction with the B1111 and The Street. Cllr Richardson met with a Highways Engineer and the Clerk to discuss the problems with visibility at this junction. The Engineer said he would come to the village and cut back the hedge to improve visibility. The Councillors felt that this would not be sufficient to address the problem. Cllr Richardson asked that the Clerk re-report the issues and he would pick this up with SCC on our behalf. Previous requests to have the work done have been denied as not meeting the criteria for intervention. The footpath edging back, along The Street, was also deemed not to meet criteria for intervention. Cllr Richardson asked the Clerk to report this issue again, and provide him with the report number, so that he could pick this up with the relevant Highways Team.

Action Cllr Richardon/Clerk

Please find below a copy of the written report circulated by Cllr Richardson ahead of the meeting.

Dunwich Heath wildfire

The major incident was stood down on 10 August after a sustained multi-agency response. Around 600 Suffolk firefighters attended during the incident, supported by crews from 18 other fire and rescue services. Road and footpath restrictions remained while hotspots were monitored and the site made safe; the incident was formally closed on 21 August. Residents were reminded to avoid the area during operations and to follow countryside fire-safety advice.

Home energy support

Two initiatives were announced to help residents reduce energy use and modernise home heating. Homeowners can apply for loans towards eligible energy-efficiency improvements through a county council partnership. Suffolk's public-sector organisations also launched a free proposal service to help households assess options for replacing ageing gas, oil or other heating systems.

River Gipping path

The full 17-mile Gipping Valley River Path reopened following major repairs and improvements at two key locations. The work restores the complete riverside route for walkers and reconnects communities along the valley, improving access to green space and supporting active travel and leisure.

Adult learners Suffolk's adult learners were recognised at an awards ceremony at Portman Road. The event celebrated individual achievement and the contribution of adult learning to skills, confidence and opportunity across the county.

Adult social care reform

The council highlighted the importance of technology and artificial intelligence in national adult social care reform. Its position was that digital tools should support earlier intervention, more personalised care and better use of staff time, while keeping people and safeguarding at the centre of service design.

Suffolk in Motion

Families were invited to a free Suffolk in Motion travel experience day taking place in the autumn. The event will showcase practical and sustainable ways to travel, giving residents opportunities to explore alternatives for everyday journeys and encouraging healthier, lower-carbon choices.

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

To confirm attendance of road sweeper to the village.

It was confirmed that the team, from WSDC, had been out to clear the gulleys and sweep the road. The footpath had not been edged back. See under Cllr Richardsons report. One of the fallen trees in Hollow Lane has been removed, following Cllr Martin reporting it on the Highways reporting tool. There are changes to some of the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) This means household planning applications, under ten properties will be determined by officers only. We will need to make sure that any responses we make to the Planning Department are detailed. There will be some training on this, hosted by WSDC to help us understand these changes. The local Government Review (LGR) has been put on hold. The District Councillors election will still go ahead next year, in May. There will not be Unity Council elections. Cllr Bull reported that the annual WSDC call for sites is now closed. This year some 328 sites have been put forward. WSDC will now look at all the sites, removing those that don't meet criteria, before carrying out a formal consultation in the future. Central Government has increased the number of homes WSDC need to provide. It was noted that the Barningham Neighbourhood Plan had gone to referendum today. The application, to house asylum seekers at RAF Barham, is on hold at the moment.

7. Progress reports from Chairman

No additional reports received.

8. To receive any progress report from Clerk:

8.1 Update from the Support our Buses project.

A meeting of the bus group was held in August. They were joined by Simon Barnet from SCC Transport. He confirmed that the funding for both the 73 and 73a will continue for the next two years. He believes that although they are not financially self-sufficient there is enough usage to justify the subsidy. They then discussed the possibility of a Saturday service and looked at a number of ways this could be provided: shuttles linking up with the 70 route or just the 73 route extending to Saturday. Simon will discuss this further with the operator and try to find some funding, We are cautiously optimistic. It was a positive meeting and Simon expressed his thanks for the very productive working relationship between ourselves and SCC.

8.2 To note meeting to discuss safety concerns on the B1111 junction with The Street. The Clerk met with Andrew Moore from SCC Highways and Cllr Richardson. It was felt that adding extra signage would not help, but we might want to consider renewing the 'SLOW' road markings, although there would be a cost involved with this. Costings will be provided. He will do some work to cut back the hedge at the junction with the B1111 and The Street, to aid visibility. See under item 5, Cllr Richardsons report.

8.3 Update on defibrillator/Webnos status.

Both Cllrs Barham and Freeman have been added as reporters on the Webnos website. Darryl Fulcher has been removed. This means that they can both do the monthly checks required. The Parish Council, Cllrs Barham and Freeman have also been added to 'The Circuit' which is the national defibrillator network, providing the NHS ambulance services with vital information about defibrillators across the UK.

8.4 To ensure all councillors have a Gmail email address.

Cllr McNeill and Snelling have set up dedicated Parish Council email addresses. The Clerk will remind Cllr Hall to set up a dedicated email address. **Action Clerk/Cllr Hall**

8.5 To confirm Clerk's pay rise.

It was noted that an agreement has been reached, by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) on the 2026-27 pay settlement. A 3.3% increase in pay was agreed. This was approved by the councillors and will be backdated for the 1st April 2026.

9. The Green/Play area report

9.1 To receive any update on the continuing maintenance of The Green.

The grass has received another cut. It was confirmed that the Parish Council had agreed to the Village Hall using The Green for a dog show on 27th September.

Concerns were raised about the cutting deck on the mower. It was recommended that the other mower is used until this has been addressed. It was agreed that a sign stating that The Green would be closed whilst the grass was being cut would be produced and displayed when the mower was being used to cut the grass. This will be added to The Green Risk Assessment Document and implemented moving forward. **Action Cllr Freeman/Clerk**

The regular inspection of The Green is being carried out by the Councillor and reported on the excel spreadsheet set up by Cllr Barham.

Cllr Freeman has given the Guy Hatten memorial bench two coats of teak oil, improving its appearance and helping to protect it from the elements.

9.2 To receive update on mower status, including mower maintenance arrangements.

The Kubota mower has been serviced and returned. The cost of this was £455.77 (including VAT) It was flagged that the battery is showing signs of wear. Cllrs Martin and Barham are meeting to discuss the old mower, which is still being looked at. **Action Cllrs Martin/Barham**

9.3 To note repairs to wheelchair kickboards.

Cllr Barham has replaced the wheelchair kickboards on both gates in to The Green.

9.4 To discuss Village Green Management Plan, circulated.

Cllr McNeill, together with Donna Jones, has prepared an updated Village Green Management Plan, reviewing and revising the original plan produced in November 2006. The updated plan, Market Weston Village Green Management Plan – Advisory Notes 2026, follows a site inspection undertaken on 26 August 2026. The inspection provided an opportunity to review the condition of the Village Green and identify any maintenance and management requirements arising since the original plan was prepared.

It was noted that the general maintenance of the Village Green over the past 20 years had been very good. However, the inspection identified a significant amount of tree work now required, particularly the removal of dead, dying and diseased wood, to ensure the safety of members of the public using or visiting the Green.

The Council agreed that the following urgent actions should be progressed:

1. **Tree works** – Obtain quotations from suitably qualified tree surgeons for the removal of dead, dying and diseased wood, including urgent works to mature trees and other identified hazardous trees. **Action Cllr McNeill/Clerk**
2. **Competent chainsaw operator** – Identify a suitably competent local chainsaw operator who can undertake tree work that does not require a specialist tree surgeon. **Action Cllr McNeill**
3. **Village Hall boundary trees** – Liaise with the Village Hall Management Committee regarding trees along the boundary which might be situated on Village Hall land and require work, including urgent works. **Action Cllrs McNeill/Martin**
4. **Paths** – Ensure that the paths are kept clear of leaves and other debris, undertake moss treatment where required, and monitor areas which become soft or waterlogged during the winter months. **Action All on Village Green Group**
5. **Old wooden items** – Continue to monitor the condition of the old wooden seat and cavity tree and consider an appropriate long-term approach as deterioration occurs, including the potential creation of wildlife habitat when the tree reaches the point of collapse. **Action All**
6. **Millstone sign** – Investigate suitable options for treating the millstone to prevent further deterioration, including seeking advice on whether a resin treatment would be appropriate. **Action Cllr McNeill**

It was agreed that some of the more remedial works, identified in the plan, could be undertaken by Cllr McNeill, Donna Jones and members of the Parish Council/Volunteers. Cllr McNeill will organise and co-ordinate this. **Action Cllr McNeill**

The Council also noted the recommendation to develop a longer-term tree/maintenance plan, including consideration of the future removal of selected trees, and to establish a realistic annual budget for the maintenance of trees, paths, fences and equipment. This will be included in the budget discussion at the next meeting.

Agreed: The urgent tree works are to be prioritised, with quotations obtained and the necessary liaison undertaken with the Village Hall Management Committee. Routine path maintenance and monitoring are also to continue.

The Council thanked those involved in preparing and reviewing the Management Plan.

10. Village matters to include Highway matters

10.1 To discuss moving the Vehicle Activated Sign(VAS to Church Road .
Cllr Freeman will move the VAS, with Cllr Barham, in October.

10.2 To receive update, from Cllr Martin, about trees in Hollow lane.
See under item 6, Cllr Bulls report.

10.3 Market Weston United Charities (MWUC). To Nominative Trustee when Rob Snelling's tenure expires in October 2026

It was agreed that the Parish Council would nominate Rob Snelling to stand again as a Nominative Trustee. It was understood that Rob Snelling would be happy to stand again. We will update the WMUC of this decision. **Action Clerk**

10.4 To discuss option to list The Mill Inn as an Asset of Community Value (ACV)

In September 2025, the Council considered whether there was sufficient local interest in listing The Mill Inn as an Asset of Community Value (ACV). At that time, following some canvassing of local residents at the village fete, there appeared to be limited interest in pursuing the proposal, and unfortunately the resident who had originally raised the matter subsequently passed away.

The Council has now been asked to revisit the proposal by the Branch Secretary of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA). A notice was placed on the Parish Council noticeboard inviting members of the public who wished to express their views or support the proposal to attend the Parish Council meeting. Unfortunately, no members of the public attended.

Following discussion, the Council agreed that it would be supportive of an application to list The Mill Inn as an ACV and recognised the value of the pub to the local community. However, the Council acknowledged that it would be difficult to commit the resources required to undertake and progress the application itself.

It was therefore agreed that, as CAMRA has expressed an interest in securing the ACV listing, they should be encouraged to submit the application directly. The Council would be happy to support CAMRA's application and provide any appropriate assistance or information where possible. The Clerk to write to CAMRA to inform them of the Council's decision and its willingness to support their application.

Action Clerk

10.5 To receive update on pavement edging, The Street.
See under item 5, Cllr Richardsons report.

11 Finance- Policies-Compliance

11.1 To consider the following payments and note any receipts.

Admin -Salary -etc	Payment	Various	-£1,032.37
Kickboards	Payment	Phil Barham B&Q	-£42.00
Website and email 2 years	Payment	Community Action Suffolk	-£82.00
Fuel	Payment	Phil Barham Tesco	-£35.00
Bank charges	Payment	Unity Trust Bank	-£7.00
Bank charges	Payment	Unity Trust Bank	-£7.00
Marquee hire	Receipt	Marquee hire	£40.00
Insurance	Payment	Gallagher	- £424.16
Mower service	Payment	Mowertec Ltd	-£455.77

11.2 Bank reconciliation, budget report and schedule of payments.

Cllr Martin approved the schedule of payments.

Cllr Freeman carried out the additional accounts check, include checking the bank reconciliation, at the meeting.

Cllrs Snelling and McNeill are currently in the process of being set up as signatories. With Cllr Barham not being available, it was acknowledge that approving the payments might be difficult until Cllrs Snelling and McNeill are approved. If possible the Clerk will approve them, in addition to Cllr Freeman, if she is able to do so.

11.3 Following review the policies below were either reviewed and updated, or adopted.

11.3 (i) Grievance and Disciplinary Policy, adopted.

11.3 (ii) Training and Development Policy, adopted.

11.3 (iii) Insurance, to include the Insurance for 2026/27. This was agreed. The Clerk will check to see if by accepting the policy now we would be tied into a three year deal. If so, we would go ahead and make sure we carry out a review of the policy before the three years are up. The policy included the war memorial and additional VAS, The pre renewal questionnaire was completed by Cllr Snelling. The Clerk will ensure the War Memorial is included on the Asset Register.

Action Clerk

11.3 (iv) Grants Policy, adopted.

(v) Reserves Policy- updated and reviewed.

11.4 Budget for 2027/28 to consider items to be included in the budget for discussion at the November meeting.

It was agreed that The Green, in particular the tree works, discussed under item 9.4 would be included in the budget discussion moving forward.

Action Clerk

11.5 To confirm signatory status, Unity Bank Trust.

The Clerk has submitted the paperwork to add Cllr Snelling and McNeill as signatories at Unity Bank. Unity Bank are reporting a backlog dealing with applications.

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

12.1 WSDC, Call for sites, circulated.

See under item 6 WSDC Cllr Bulls report.

12.2 WSDC To note changes to National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), information circulated. See under item 6 WSDC Cllr Bulls report.

12.3 DC/26/1188/HH n - a. single storey rear extension b. detached four bay cart lodge Liberty House Hepworth Road Market Weston.

The Parish Council had no Objection to this application . Cllr Snelling declared an interest in this application and did not vote.

13. Councillors reports and items for future agenda

A resident has contacted Cllr Martin about a complaint received regarding footpath access. This matter is in hand.

Cllr Hall raised concerns about parish security. The Clerk will invite our local police representative to attend the next meeting to discuss this matter further.

Action Clerk

14. Correspondence for information/action

The items listed below have been circulated for information.

14.1 to note updated Members' of interest Form. Noted.

16. Date of next meetings:

Date of next meeting Thursday 19th November 2026, 7pm 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.