WEREHAM PARISH COUNCIL
Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council
22 September 2025 at 6.45 pm
In the Community Room, Wereham Village Hall, Wereham

Attendance:
Cllr Sandra Calvert (Chair) (SC)
Cllr Stephen Bradsell (SB) (Vice Chair)
Cllr Jo Wellington-Bruce (JWB)
Cllr Jennie Day (JD)
Cllr Jonathan Marsh (JM)
Cllr Bridget Slade (BS)
Helen Richardson Parish Clerk and Financial Responsible Person

Also in attendance:
Residents of Wereham - Public – 2 (Included Chair and Representative of the Pangle Charity)
Cllr Martin Storey, Norfolk County Councillor
Cllr Sue Lintern, Borough Councillor, BCK/LWN

67/25 Note Openness and Transparency Notice and To Consider Apologies
The Chair read the Openness and Transparency Notice and the reverse of the agenda detailing the standing orders. Apologies were received and approved from Cllr Gail Koopowitz (personal reasons).

68/25 Declarations of Interest
There was none.

69/25 To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council on 8 July 2025 and To Note the Matters Arising Report (A Representative from the Pangle Charity attended on request by the Parish Council to provide an overview of the Charity).

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 8 July 2025 be approved. (JWB Proposed, SB Seconded, all were in favour).

Representatives of the Pangle, including the Chair attended to provide an oversight of the Charity following the previous meeting of what it involves and how it works:

- Wereham Relief Charity began in November 1986, which amalgamed 5 smaller charities connected to the Church and the fuel allotment fund known locally at The Pangle.
- The small church charities were regulated by the Charity Committee in 1890. The fuel allotment was granted to the parish by act of parliament in 1815.
- The land is a triangular piece of land of around 20 acres near the sugar beer factory. Access to the land is in this location.
- Prior to 1986 the PCC were responsible for administering the four church charities and the PC was responsible for the Pangle. This was a duplication of time and effort. The PCC and the PC applied to the charity commission to change them all into one fund/charity in 1986 to be called the Pangle Charity.
- There are seven trustees, two are nominative being one from the Parish Council and one from the Parochial Church Council, this reflects the historical involvement in the original running of these charities. The other 5 trustees are co-opted, which are persons who are residents, have occupation, employment or have special knowledge of the parish of Wereham.
- The income of the charity is made up from the income from the church charities which are now invested in the charity commission investment fund and the annual rent from the Pangle.
- The current tenant of the Pangle's rent is reviewed and paid annually. To protect the Pangle, the trustees registered it with the land registry in 2024.
- The Chair shared that it is interesting to see how it has evolved to effect social change, in 1815 it would have been woodland for fuel, hence the wood. And as people become affluent the charity

moved to giving people coal not wood, this then changed to electricity stamps. It is now involved to give applicants a cheque and in future this will be a bank transfer.

- The charity funding is available to anyone in writing, applicable to one member per household who is over the age of 66 and has lived in the village at least 5 years.
- There were 29 applicants last year who received £45 each.
- A contingency fund is kept by for relief in application for anyone outside those application rules.
- The PCC has a copy of the constitution. The finances can be found on the charity commission website under Wereham Relief Charity.

Responses to questions from the PC:

- The fund is managing around £1600. This is income from interest invested and the land rental. A reasonable amount is kept back for emergency relief.
- The amount is divided between those who apply.
- There is a new footpath (bridle way) being reinstated.
- The lease of the land at this time is under what is known as a 1986 act agricultural tenancy, this is for old tenancies of this type, this particular tenancy can be leased for three generations. If this was not possible you would look for a new tenant. The current tenancy is the second generation.
- The charge cannot be linked to market value.
- The Charity advertises the fund in the village early November.
- The Clerk whilst nominated by the PC would be a trustee in their own right.

The PC shared that they would be happy to offer assistance to the charity in advertising the funding on its website and Facebook page if that would help. The PC noted that it had nominated the Clerk to be their nominee at their last meeting and discussed this decision which they had made.

Cllr Sue Lintern Update

- BCKLWN has focused on the Local Government Reform (LGR) plan in recent months.
- A Business Plan has been developed and is being submitted to central government this week.
- Parish Councils were invited to information sessions; the plan has been approved for submission.
- BCKLWN proposes three unitary councils; South Norfolk suggests two; NCC supports a single unitary model.
- BCKLWN's plan includes 72 unitary councillors for West Norfolk.
- Business Plans outline potential models, not final decisions.
- Final arrangements will be determined by newly elected unitary councillors in 2027, who may choose alternative approaches.

Cllr Martin Storey

- NCC supports a single unitary model, with a proposal scheduled for approval on 25th September.
- He voted for the submission at BCKLWN and will advocate at NCC, prioritising the interests of West Norfolk residents.
- 65% of the UK population is under unitary councils, which may strengthen the case for a single unitary model.
- A public consultation is planned for November; responses are encouraged, but it will not be a formal vote.
- He contacted the Highways Manager about pond resurfacing and believes the Clerk has also been informed.
- Concerns were raised about pylons and solar panels transferring energy from Norfolk to Essex, viewed by some as disruptive to the landscape and non-food producing.
- NCC formally opposed this energy transfer initiative.

- NCC ranks among the top councils for climate action, placing third in recent awards based on a performance scorecard.

A Councillor asked what would happen to the Highways service in West Norfolk with devolution, Cllr Martin Storey shared that it was currently unknown.

70/25 Tree Management Survey and Diocese Response (Scots Pine Tree)

The PC had received quotes to approve as detailed in the tree survey conducted in June 2025 to trees in the St Margaret's Churchyard. The Clerk had endeavoured to get three quotes for this work.

RESOLVED: That a quote for £1100 plus VAT be approved to do the final work from the June 2025 survey actioned in the churchyard. (BS proposed, JWB seconded, all in were favour).

Following a qualified tree surgeon's survey confirming the need to fell the Scots Pine in St Margaret's churchyard, the Clerk reported that the Diocese of Ely invoiced Wereham Parish Council approximately £350 for verifying this conclusion.

The Parish had already funded the survey and tree works, with approval from the Borough Council's tree officer. The Clerk noted that the Diocese could not have refused the request unless it assumed full responsibility from the Council.

Due to legislation governing closed churchyards, the Parish is legally obliged to fund maintenance, including trees, walls, memorial safety, and grounds — a responsibility that cannot be reversed. This has led to significant ongoing costs, with recent tree-related expenses reaching thousands of pounds.

The Parish Council expressed strong objection to paying the Diocese's invoice, given that the tree belonged to the church and the Parish had already incurred substantial costs. It was suggested the charge may have arisen due to internal staffing issues at the Diocese, but the Council agreed this was not its responsibility.

The Council resolved that it lacked authority to use public funds for this invoice and would formally advise the Diocese that it would not be paying it.

Regarding the Diocese's request for a commitment to plant a replacement tree, the Council clarified its role is limited to health and safety obligations. The Clerk will consult the Borough Council's Tree Officer in light of the churchyard's conservation status to plant a replacement tree.

RESOLVED: That the invoice received from the Diocese will not be paid. The Clerk will consult the Tree Officer about the replacement tree, with further discussion at the November meeting. (SC proposed; BS seconded, all were in favour)

71/25 Bi-Monthly Health and Safety Inspection

The Chair reported on the biodiversity garden working party. The Parish Council thanked Sandra and the volunteers, noting the garden remains a valued and well-respected part of the village, thriving impressively despite dry conditions. The Clerk inspected the pond, playing field, play area, and churchyard. The cemetery will be inspected next week, with any health and safety concerns to be reported.

<u>Pond</u>

- Large tree and shrubbery to be tidied near pond sluice – adding to grounds maintenance contract.
- Pond edge may need budget spend allocated to tidy next year, visible when water low.
- Clearance of bushes near pond to be actioned on the new contract
- Edge from pond side looks good.
- Branches overhanging bus stop – Clerk to ask tree contractor who does the St Margaret's Church yard.
- Adding bench, noticeboard, railings to painting programme early next year.
- Blocked drains on road near pond to be reported.

Church yard

- Some ivy on memorials – resolve early next year.
- Gates to be added to painting programme next year
- New sign needed – clerk to arrange.

Playing field

- All okay.
- Play area annual inspection in few weeks time.
- Divit in the entrance to the playpark to be filled in.

A Councillor reported there had been a lot of dog waste left down Lammas Lane.

The Clerk agreed to report to Highways the footpath at the top of the row main road towards Kings Lynn, by the railings, as the pavement was buckling and was a dangerous tripping hazard.

72/25 Grounds Maintenance Contract
The Council reviewed the grounds maintenance contract ahead of obtaining quotes 3 year contract (annual performance review dependant) in November. The PC had no further additions to the paperwork, the Clerk would send out to around 5 contractors early October for review in November.

73/25 Boundary of the Playing Field and Village Hall Car Park

The Parish Council agreed to explore improved boundary marking between the playing field and village hall car park, proposing an extension of the existing posts to prevent vehicle encroachment, with one section widened for emergency access. The Chair advised against installing a gate, noting the area is a public open space regularly accessed by a tractor for grass cutting. Any changes will require permission from Heygates. The Clerk will obtain quotes for matching posts along the Council's access strip, to be reviewed at the November meeting.

74/25 Remembrance Wreath
Cllr Bridget agreed to ask a local service person to lay the wreath.
RESOLVED: That a wreath be purchased up to £30. (JWB Proposed; seconded JD, all were in favour).

75/25 Email Address of the Parish Council
The PC received quotes to approve from NALC to set up a Government Compliant Website and Email Addresses for Councillors. The costs were around £300 plus VAT to set it up and ongoing costs, this was an audit requirement from next year.
RESOLVED: That quotes for NALC to create the website and set up email addresses be approved. (Proposed JD; Seconded JWB, all were in favour).

76/25 NCC Parish Partnership Fund 2026/27

The PC discussed the fund for 2026/27, deadline early December. The Council agreed to consider further and if there was anything to bring to the November meeting for decision it would be added to the agenda.

77/25 Parish Council Printer

The current printer was no longer working and the PC needed a new one.

RESOLVED: That purchase of a new laser jet printer and ink be approved up to £100. (Proposed SB; Seconded JD, all were in favour).

78/25 Register of Decisions

RESOLVED: That the register of decisions be approved which included the payment of the grounds maintenance contractor invoice end of May for £821 exc VAT and payment to tree contract £800 felling of Scots pine tree. (Proposed JWB; Seconded BS, all were in favour).

79/25 Payments to Date

	Payee	Service	Exc VAT	VAT	Inc VAT
1	**Parish Clerk**	Wages, Expenses and Mileage (July and August)	655.70	0.00	655.70
2	**HMRC**	PAYE (July and August) - recalculated by Payroll year end	199.37	0.00	199.37
3	**Wereham Village Hall**	Hall Hire - September	27.50	0.00	27.50
4	**Unity Trust Bank**	Bank Charge (August and September)	12.00	0.00	12.00
5	**HHA Ltd**	Grounds Maintenance (PAID)	644.82	136.85	821.07
6	**HHA Ltd**	Grounds Maintenance	715.74	143.15	858.89
7	**Boyd Willett**	Tree Maintenance Scots Pine Fell (PAID)	800.00	0.00	800.00
8	**Golden Tree Surgeons**	Tree Survey June 2025 (PAID)	200.00	40.00	240.00
9	**Norfolk County Council**	50% Cost Speed Sign - Parish Partnership Fund 2025/26 (PAID)	2330.00	0.00	2330.00
10	**Norfolk Association of Local Councils**	Annual Subscription Fee 2025/26	207.79	0.00	207.79
11	**PKF Littlejohn**	External Audit Fee 2024/25	210.00	42.00	252.00
12	**Community Heartbeat Trust**	Defib Pads (1 or 2 sets expiry date reached) (PAID)	74.95	14.99	89.94
13	**Wickstead**	Repair to Gate (Play Area)	269.21	53.84	323.05

RESOLVED: That payments be approved excluding the Diocese of Ely Invoice. (Proposed SB; Seconded JD, all were in favour).

80/25 Councillors' Concerns and Agenda Items for Next Meeting

- The Clerk will arrange replacement Perspex in the noticeboard at the pond.
- The Clerk will report the damaged road condition of the T junction at the Wretton row to Highways.
- The Clerk agreed to follow up the replacement directional sign on College Road which had been damaged for months and Highways were yet to replace.
- It was agreed to add Dog Bins to the November meeting. The Clerk would be replacing polite notices signs on the bins to advise people to take their waste home or to an alternative bin if full. The Clerk agreed to seek a quote from the handyman to move a bin should that be agreed at the November meeting.
- The PC confirmed following a question that it did not test the water in the pond.

81/25 Date of Next Meeting – Ordinary Meeting of the Wereham Parish Council Monday, 10 November 2025 at 6.45 pm in the Community Room, Wereham Village Hall.
This was noted.

82/25 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC The Council will be requested to pass a resolution excluding the press and public from the meeting in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted as follows: To Approve HR Matter: Clerks Pay.

RESOLVED: That the Clerk's hourly rate be adjusted as per industry agreement for 2025/26. (Proposed JWB, Seconded JM, all were in favour).