WEREHAM PARISH COUNCIL
Extraordinary Meeting of the Parish Council
29 June 2026 at 10.00 am
In the Main Hall, Wereham Village Hall, Church Road, Wereham, Norfolk

Attendance:
Cllr Sandra Calvert (SC) (Chair)
Cllr Stephen Bradsell (SB) (Vice Chair)
Cllr Gail Koopowitz (GK)
Cllr Bridget Slade (BS)
Cllr Jo Wellington-Bruce (JWB)
Helen Richardson Parish Clerk and Financial Responsible Person

Also in attendance:
Residents of Wereham - Public – 34
Cllr Sue Lintern Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Councillor
Cllr Mike Westman Norfolk County Council Councillor

43/26 Note Openness and Transparency Notice and To Consider and Accept apologies for absence
Apologies were received and accepted for Cllr Jonathan Marsh (JM).

44/26 Declarations of Interest: To note declarations of interest on agenda items and dispensation requests.
There was nothing to declare.

45/26 Planning Application Consultation To Discuss and Approve a Response in Regard to Planning Application 26/00987/PIP. PERMISSION IN PRINCIPLE: Construction of up to 5 affordable dwellings at Land at Stoke Road, Wereham, King's Lynn, Norfolk

Public Comments – Summary of Statements Made by Residents

REDACTED

- Farms the field next to the proposed development site.
- Stated that when he was Chair of the Council 20 years ago, the field was identified with "all stars for non-deposition".
- Raised concerns about rumours that after the five proposed houses, a further 75 may follow.
- Noted that approximately 200 metres from the site is a farm with nearly 2,000 pigs. Some residents of new estates often complain about agricultural activity, despite pigs having been kept there for 70 years. He questioned why new residents should be allowed to "jump on top of it".

REDACTED

- Lives next to the proposed development and recently moved to the village with a young child.
- Concerned that construction noise will be disruptive, especially as they need to keep windows open.
- Nothing about the development appeared in their property searches when purchasing their home.
- Moved to the village for peace and quiet.
- Reported existing issues with water pressure for himself and neighbours; additional houses will worsen water supply problems.
- Concerned about drainage: the site is farmland and acts as rainwater run-off. Replacing it with concrete may increase flood risk.

- Questioned whether the sewage system has capacity for five houses plus any future expansion.
- Highlighted the presence of natural wildlife, including species native to Norfolk that are less common in built-up areas. Development would harm local ecology.
- Questioned the claim of “affordable housing” in a desirable neighbourhood. Believes the homes will not be affordable unless built to a poor standard, and will likely carry high market prices.

REDACTED

- Lives on Stoke Road.
- Concerned about amenities and infrastructure coping with additional housing.
- If rumours of 75 further houses are true, this could mean at least 80 additional cars entering the village.
- A car previously went through their wall; there are frequent collisions on the A134.
- Difficult to exit their driveway due to bends in the road.
- The site is close to a pedestrian crossing and the brow of a hill; additional traffic will worsen safety and create chaos.

REDACTED

- Lives on Church Road.
- Asked when the traffic survey was conducted.
- Stated it was done during half-term, not during the sugar beet season, which is when traffic levels are significantly higher.

Resident (next to REDACTED)

- Described exiting their driveway as a “nightmare”; must pull out quickly due to poor visibility around the corner.
- More traffic would be hazardous and increase accident risk.
- Drains collapse nearly every two months, leading to roadworks and disruption.
- Additional houses would be built directly behind their property, spoiling their outlook.
- Wildlife present includes red kites, bats, and hares; development would damage their ecosystem.
- Raised questions about the proposed entrance to the site.
- Warned that approving five houses opens the “floodgate” to larger development.
- Stated that Wereham is a beautiful village and excessive expansion will ruin it.

Cllr Sue Lintern (Borough Councillor)

- Explained she sits on the Borough Council Planning Committee.
- Confirmed planning officers will recognise if an application is part of a phased development.
- Emphasised that decisions must be based on **material planning considerations** only.
- Non-material issues (e.g., construction disruption, personal circumstances) cannot be considered.
- The Borough must find 989 new houses, making refusals difficult without strong planning grounds.
- She takes instruction from the Parish Council: if the PC objects, she can call the application in to committee and speak on the PC’s behalf, though she cannot vote.
- Government rules will change on 1 October, removing the right for Borough Councillors to call in applications.
- Advised residents to focus on strong reasons for objection:
    - A134 safety
    - Lack of infrastructure (Wereham is a Tier 5 village with no school or shop)
    - Noise disturbance
- Encouraged residents to submit individual comments.

Road Safety & Lighting Discussion

- Residents described the A134 as a “death trap” for crossing, especially for elderly residents.
- No zebra crossing; drivers at 40mph cannot see pedestrians.
- Bollards are frequently knocked down.
- The road is extremely dark; previous attempts to improve lighting have failed.
- Councillors advised residents to report issues online via County Council systems and FixMyStreet.

Mitigation Possibilities

- Cllr Lintern noted that planning officers may consider mitigation measures such as requiring a pedestrian crossing if the development is approved.
- Conditions can be enforceable.

REDACTED

- Stated A134 lighting is “non-existent”, comparable to 1950s gas lighting.
- Raised concerns about children having no school, low water pressure, and multiple infrastructure issues.
- Believes the development is not just five houses.
- Reported zig-zag road markings outside the hall have been down since January; despite claims they were repaired, they remain unfixed.

Housing Need & Affordable Housing Discussion

- Chair explained that Housing Options assess need across areas; residents can specify preferred locations.
- Parish Council could conduct its own housing needs survey.
- Cllr Lintern recommended undertaking a survey.
- PIP (Planning in Principle) applications identify infrastructure needs such as crossings and landscaping.
- Parish Council could request permanent, significant landscaping if approval is granted.

Resident (Man) – Infrastructure & Services

- Stated the village relies entirely on Boughton Surgery and Downham Market for services.
- Concerned that development in Downham will overwhelm GPs and shops.
- Cllr Lintern said Boughton Surgery has capacity according to NHS figures, though residents reported difficulty obtaining prescriptions and appointments.
- Schools in Stoke Ferry reportedly have space to expand but lack funding and teachers.
- Chair noted that home delivery vans add to road congestion and make crossing the A134 harder.

Further Infrastructure Concerns

- Doctors may have capacity to register patients but not to offer timely appointments.
- Public transport is almost non-existent; residents must drive for shopping and services.
- A zebra crossing is unlikely on a 40mph road.
- Defibrillator access is difficult because residents cannot safely cross the A134.
- All sewage from Wereham is pumped to Stoke Ferry; unclear whether it can cope with additional load.
- Noise buffer promised during bypass construction was never implemented; NCC later cut the trees.

School Capacity

- All Saints Academy reportedly has space for 100 children and currently has 91,but lacks room and teachers for expansion.
- Stoke Ferry developments (200 homes) are considered major and are progressing.

Positive Approach Suggested by Cllr Lintern

- Suggested residents consider asking for infrastructure improvements if development proceeds:
    - Industrial units
    - Lower speed limits funded by the developer
    - Other community benefits

Resident Comments

- One resident felt discussing mitigation weakens objections; they do not want any houses built in Wereham.
- Cllr Lintern noted infill development will still occur.
- Another resident said that approving small developments opens the door to large-scale building across three fields.
- Jack Murphy noted that many more residents objected to previous development proposals.
- Cllr Jo Wellington-Bruce confirmed long-standing community opposition has been consistent across multiple applications.

REDACTED

- Highlighted the A134 as a major concern.
- Asked when Highways will become involved.

Cllr Lintern Response

- Stated that because only five houses are proposed, Highways may not consider it intensification.

Resident – Footpath & Layout

- Footpath along the A134 is very narrow and dangerous at night.
- Layout of the proposed development is not in keeping with the village.
- Street lighting and a lower speed limit would be required.

Resident – Access Road

- Asked what the access road shown in the plans is for.
- Cllr Lintern said planning officers will see it.
- Chair noted that Highways refused an application for nine houses in Methwold.

Closing Notes

- Deadline for comments was Tuesday 30 June.
- There are currently 28 public comments submitted.
- Residents were encouraged to submit individual objections, not just one per household.
- Councillors may also object individually.

Council Discussion – Planning Application 26/00987/PIP

Land at Stoke Road, Wereham – Permission in Principle for up to 5 Affordable Dwellings

Opening Remarks

The Chair opened the discussion and confirmed strong support for the concerns raised by residents regarding the A134, noting that this issue has been consistently raised over many years.

JWB shared that having recently visited properties affected by the proposal, including the former Clerk's residence, the Chair stated that the proximity to the A134 alone presents a major objection to the development.

The Chair further noted that 19 houses were currently for sale in Wereham, many of which have been on the market for over a year, particularly in Crown Gardens. This indicates no identifiable housing need within the village.

Agricultural Context

The Council discussed that the land was adjacent to a long-established pig farm. Members expressed concern that new residents may later object to agricultural operations, despite farming being a longstanding and essential part of the area. It was noted that the land was not offered to local farmers and instead went directly to a developer, despite active farmers seeking land to purchase.

Highway Safety

The Council emphasised that crossing the A134 is "taking your life into your hands," describing the road as extremely dangerous for pedestrians and drivers alike.

It was noted that similar concerns were raised in previous applications on the opposite side of the road, and that approaches have already been made regarding other fields, suggesting ongoing development pressure in the area.

Cllr Mike Westman later reinforced that highway safety is a powerful material consideration, particularly given his own experience of unsafe crossings and the heavy HGV traffic on the A134. He stressed that the safety argument is one of the strongest available to the Parish Council.

Traffic Survey Concerns

The Council noted that atraffic survey was conducted during half-term rather than during the sugar beet season, when traffic was significantly heavier. This was considered to have skewed the results and not to reflect true traffic conditions on the A134.

Population and Assumptions

It was highlighted that the developer's documentation incorrectly assumed a population of 6,000 for the wider area within the planning statement, whereas Wereham has approximately 330 houses, making the assumptions significantly overstated and misleading.

Material Planning Considerations Identified

The Council agreed that the following **material considerations** form the basis of objection:

- **Infrastructure capacity** (GP, school, drainage, sewage)
- **Noise and disturbance** impacts
- **Highway safety** (A134 crossing, visibility, HGV traffic)
- **Smells/fumes** from adjacent agricultural operations
- **Deficiencies in social facilities** (small pub, no shop, no school)
- **Impact on nature conservation** (local wildlife, rural character)
- **Outside the development boundary** (Tier 5 village)
- **Layout and design not in keeping** with the village's visual appearance; inaccurate landscaping; inconsistent with rural Tier 5 character
- **Housing need already met** (the identified need for 7 dwellings was fulfilled by the Flegg Green development)

Local Plan Context

Cllr Sue Lintern advised that a new Local Plan will be required and noted that birth rates have dropped, further reducing future housing need projections. She reiterated that the site lies outside the development boundary, and that the existing pattern of single-fronted properties at that end of the village is consistent with the established street scene .

Representation at Planning Committee

Cllr Sue Lintern confirmed she would not be able to vote at the Planning Committee if she called in the application, but the Chair confirmed she would attend and speak on behalf of the Parish Council. Public speaking slots will also be available. The application is likely to be considered at the October Planning Committee.

Cllr Mike Westman's Contribution

Cllr Westman stated he would represent the village if permitted. Drawing on his experience as a district councillor and former planning committee member, he emphasised the importance of presenting clear, objective, material considerations rather than emotional arguments. He reiterated the significance of highway safety and encouraged residents to submit objections before the deadline.

He confirmed he would also submit his own objection via the planning portal.

Additional Points for Inclusion

The Clerk noted the developer's reference to a potential right-turn arrangement, which raised further concerns.

The Council agreed to reference Autoville and Holme Oak in the objection response, and to cite relevant Local Plan policies LP13, LP18, and LP21.

It was also noted that a similar application in Hilgay (Tier 5) proceeded to the Planning Inspector, demonstrating the importance of robust objections.

RESOLVED: Wereham Parish Council objects to Planning Application 26/00987/PIP – Permission in Principle for up to 5 affordable dwellings at Land at Stoke Road, Wereham. The Council further approved that Cllr Sue Lintern, Borough Councillor, call in the application on behalf of the Parish Council so that it is considered by the Planning Committee. (Proposed: SC; Seconded: GK; All in favour)

46/25 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next ordinary parish council meeting was noted as being on Tuesday, 21 July 2026 at 6.45 pm in the Community Room, Wereham Village Hall was noted.

11.25 am closed meeting.