

**WICKEN PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING HELD AT 19:30 HRS ON TUESDAY 12 MAY 2026
WICKEN MISSION HALL**

In Attendance (a minimum of 3 Councillors must be present for business to be conducted):
Cllrs A Cogan, M Hawes, S Hill, L Houghton, B Pepper, P Rash, C Robinson, J Rogers.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr Barnes, County Councillor Hawker-Dawson and District Councillor Vellacott.

2. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

The meeting was handed to the clerk.

Election of Chair – Cllr Pepper was proposed by Cllr Houghton and seconded by Cllr Roger. There were no other nominations. All were in favour. Cllr Pepper duly accepted the position.

Election of Vice Chair – Cllr Rogers was proposed by Cllr Houghton and seconded by Cllr Pepper. There were no other nominations. All were in favour. Cllr Rogers duly accepted the position.

3. Acceptance of Office

Cllr Pepper and Cllr Rogers signed the acceptance of office.

The meeting was handed back to the Chair.

4. To Receive Declarations of Interest

- a) Councillors to declare any personal interest in any items on the agenda.
- b) Councillors to declare any prejudicial interest in any items on the agenda and to inform the Chairman if they wish to speak on the matter during public participation.
- c) Councillors to declare any pecuniary interest in any items on the agenda.

Cllr Houghton declared a personal and prejudicial interest in item 19.

5. Appointment of Committees

Burial Board	Cllr Houghton Cllr Cogan Cllr Hill
Allotment Committee	Cllr Rash Cllr Barnes Cllr Hill
Recreation Committee	Cllr Hawes Cllr Robinson
Mary Hatch Alms Houses	Cllr Cogan
Village Hall Committee	Cllr Barnes

Wicken Fen Forum	Cllr Pepper Cllr Robinson Cllr Rash
The Chair and Vice Chair are members of all committees.	

6. Public Participation.

The meeting will be adjourned for up to 10 minutes to allow any members of the public and Councillors declaring a prejudicial interest to address the meeting in relation to the business to be transacted at that meeting.

There were no requests to speak.

7. County and District Councillor Reports

District Councillor Vellacott had submitted a written report on the following:

- Will be raising the issue of a timetabled bus franchise
- The state of the cut through from Wicken to Soham
- Lower Road repairs
- The annual meeting of ECDC is on 21 May 2026
- Grants from ECDC are available

County Councillor Hawker-Dawson had submitted a written report and updates on the following:.

- He was awaiting an update on the assessment of Lower Road.
- Working with Highways in the next steps for the resurfacing of Back Lane
- An update on the land at the rear of 28 Stretham Road.

The Parish Council are grateful to both District Councillor Vellacott and County Councillor Hawker-Dawson for their work with Highways. The Parish Council notes that Highways issues should be a County Councillor role and ask that County Councillor Hawker-Dawson joins the Wicken and Wicken Parish Council Facebook pages, so he is more accessible to residents.

8. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 14 April 2026

The minutes were approved as a true and correct copy and signed by the Chair.

9. Progress Report on Matters Arising from the Minutes 14 April 2026

9.1 Highways signage – the 20mph signs for Lode Lane was ongoing and was now with the Highways Engineers.

9.2 War Memorial – This will be revised later in the year when the war memorial had dried.

9.3 Painting of the Cemetery Railings –The clerk had reported the condition of the footpath from the cemetery to Hall Farm to Highways. The clerk would obtain further quotes for painting the railings.

9.4 Land rear of 28 Stretham Road – this was with Planning Enforcement and would take some time before anything was known.

9.5 Erosion of the bank on the lode at the Maltings – The Chair had emailed David Smith from the EA and awaited a reply. There was concern regarding the bench as this was in a poor condition and close to the edge. The Parish Council recommend a new plastic bench is installed and Cllr Houghton will ask the Community Fund if they would like to replace the current bench which they purchased in memory of Sir Joseph Pope.

9.6 Upware hedge –This had been reported to Highways. The clerk will pick this up with District Cllr Hawker-Dawson if needed.

9.7 Christmas tree lights – The clerk would be meeting with the Chair of Stretham Parish Council regarding their lights. Cllr Hill would also attend.

9.8 Tree Works – The tree works for the ash tree would take place on 20 May 2026. The village tree inspection would take place on 31 July 2026.

9.9 BESS – Cllr Houghton will write to the developers to start initial conversations regarding community compensation for the disruption.

9.10 Village Hall Parking – The Hall Committee had agreed to put notices on cars parked in the hall car park advising it was private parking.

10. Planning Matters

There were no planning applications.

10.2 Update on Planning Applications Approved/Refused by ECDC

There were no updates.

11. Internal Auditors Report

The 2025/26 accounts had been audited by David Leonard MSc, CDipAF, CPIM in his role as Internal Auditor. The report showed all objectives were met and there were no recommendations.

12. Approval of the Annual Governance Statement 2025/26

The Parish Council answered Yes to all sections of the Annual Governance Statement for 2025/26. The AGAR form was signed by the Chairman and Clerk.

13. Approval of the Accounting Statements 2025/26

The Council agreed that the Accounting Statements 2025/26 presented fairly the financial position of the authority, and this was signed by the Chairman and the Clerk.

14. Approval of the Standing Orders

Approval of the Standing Orders was proposed by Cllr Rogers and seconded by Cllr Houghton. All were in favour.

15. Approval of the Financial Regulations

Approval of the Financial Regulations was proposed by Cllr Rogers and seconded by Cllr Hill. All were in favour.

16. Review of the Fixed Assets

It was agreed that some of the fixed assets for insurance purposes should be increased to:

- Signs £500
- Changing rooms £80k
- Village sign £3k

17. Neighbourhood Plan Update

The Working Group was in the process of completing the character assessment. The Working Group would be meeting with Places4People in June and will obtain a timeline for the remaining work.

18. RoSPA Report of the Recreation Ground and Pond Green Play Area

Maintenance work had been completed last year, and this was reflected in the results in the RoSPA report.

10. Changing Rooms on the Recreation Ground – Proposal by the Recreation Ground Committee and Decision on Works to Go Ahead

Cllr Houghton left the meeting at 8.50pm

Following the tender submissions and concerns around the cost, the Recreation Committee had met and proposed that maintenance work was completed on the changing rooms rather than the full refurbishment. This would include new windows and doors, a screen in the shower to divide the home and away teams, a refurbished kitchen, decoration and a wet room for the referee which could also be used as a disabled toilet. This would also include any other work which was required.

Cllr Rash proposed that the full refurbishment project carried on with grants applications where required. This proposal was not seconded.

On behalf of the Recreation committee, Cllr Robinson proposed the maintenance work as described above. This was seconded by Cllr Cogan all were in favour with the exception of Cllr Rash. This work would go ahead as soon as possible.

The resurfacing of the MUGA would be revisited once the maintenance work was completed.

Cllr Houghton joined the meeting at 9.10pm

20. Diversion of Footpath 25

An application had been received by CCC from James Developments Co Ltd to divert public footpath 25 under section 119 of the Highways Act 1980. It was noted that this footpath had already been diverted locally for well over 25 years. The proposal would provide a 2-metre-wide path but currently it was much narrower. The Parish Council had no objections to the diversion but would ask CCC to ensure the path was 2m wide.

21. Woodlands Trust Free Trees for Communities

It was decided not to take up the offer this time.

22. Local Government Reorganisations Parish Impact Assessment

CAPALC had created a very informative and useful impact assessment for Wicken for the LGR which considered the impact each option could have on the village. This will be revisited when it was known which option is taken.

23. Cemetery Car Park Maintenance

CLlr Rash would fill the potholes in the cemetery car park with the road planings. The Parish Council had also been approached by residents of Cross green asking for road planings for the potholes on the Cross Green roadway. Whilst this is not an adopted road and not the responsibility of the Parish Council to maintain it was agreed that the road planings could be used on this occasion. The residents would complete the work themselves.

24. Financial Matters

24.1 Bill payments

Rachel James	Clerk wages May 2026	£703.08
HMRC	Employers PAYE	£179.60
Nest Pension	Employees Contribution	£15.11
Nest Pension	Employers Contribution	£11.33
HMRC NI	Employers NI for May 2026	£72.12
RH Landscapes	Grass cutting April 2026	£1436.55
Ely Food Bank	Donation	£150.00
ICO	Data protection fee	£52.00
Fasthosts	Domain renewal	£15.40
C Jones	Refund of deposit for the hire of the gazebos	£40.00
RoSPA	Annual inspections	£218.40
M Hawes	Microsoft office	£8.99
Gov.uk	Land search	£7.00
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R James (Amazon)	Key safe	£14.95
E Houghton	Refreshments for litter picking	£13.80

24.2 Monthly Finance update

The monthly finance report showed the Parish Council was in a stable position.

24.3 Bank Reconciliation to 29 April 2026

This had been circulated and noted.

14. Items for Information

Cllr Robinson and Houghton had organised the annual litter pick with 17 people attending.

Cllr Rash advised that he had been contacted by 2 residents with concerns with the cycle path due to a possible issue with travellers setting up camp on the wide surface and also one of the narrowing obstacles not being in place. This was a Highways issue but was noted.

Following enquiries received through Facebook for dog bins on the cycle path, Cllr Houghton had contacted ECDC who advised that this could not be done due to the issue of emptying as this only happens with road access.

Cllr Houghton had also contacted Highways to ask for the white lines to be renewed at the junction of Drury Lane and Chapel Lane. This had been completed. A further request has been submitted for white lines at the junction of Chapel Lane and Lower Road.

The tree at the entrance of the Maids Head drive was causing visibility issues. Cllr Pepper would remove some branches to improve visibility.

Cllr Houghton asked for the 2 items to be placed on the June agenda. These were an extension to the cemetery and also the need for a Parish Council mobile phone.

The speed sign along Church Road had been damaged but the company where it had been purchased had gone into administration. Cllr Pepper will investigate getting a replacement screen. There had been an instance of the burning of garden waste which had raised a complaint. Although this was not illegal it would be beneficial if residents considered the direction of smoke for other residents and animals.

There were no further business and the meeting closed at 10.21pm

Monthly Task List

Cllr Rash – repair of the cemetery car park

Cllr Pepper – investigate the byway narrowing on the cycle path.

Cllr Pepper – investigate options for replacement speed sign screen.

Cllr Pepper – investigate removal of low tree branches on Maids Head drive.

Cllr Houghton – contact BESS company re financial compensation.

Cllr Houghton – contact Wicken Community Fund re the provision of a new bench at The Maltings.