

WICKEN PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING HELD AT 19:30 HRS ON TUESDAY 9 SEPTEMBER 2025
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, C Robinson, J Rogers and District Councillor Vellacott and 1 parishioner.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

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

2. 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 Rogers declared an interest in agenda item 15.

3. 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.

The resident of 11 Back Lane requested the support of the Parish Council regarding keeping the newly erected fence as close board fencing rather than picket fencing as requested by ECDC.

Item 7.2 was brought forward

7.2 Removal of the conifer hedge and replace with close board fencing and picket fencing of 1m and 1.8m according to location – retrospective. 11 back Lane, Wicken Ref 25/00697/FUL

The Parish Council supports the previous application of close board fencing which has enhanced the location considerably. The neighbouring properties fencing is variable with some already being close board fencing. A picket fence would allow road surface water to penetrate the boundary of the property. The Parish Council therefore supports the resident's request for the close board fencing to remain and objects to the need to change this to picket fencing.

The parishioner left the meeting at 7.40pm

4. County and District Councillor Reports

District Councillor Vellacott had provided a written report in his absence updating on the following subjects:

- A meeting had been arranged with the Mayor at the end of September to discuss the future of public transport through the parish following a cross party letter.
- CCC's plan to withdraw free CambWifi from village halls
- The next councillor surgery would be held in around 3 months time

- The battery storage application would be decided at the planning committee meeting in October or November.
- Update on Local Government Reorganisation.
- ECDC had written to the Deputy PM about the proposed planning and infrastructure changes.

County Councillor Hawker-Dawsin had provided a written report in his absence updating on the following subjects:

- Local Government Reorganisation
- Cambridge Children's Hospital
- 'Good' rating for adult social care services
- Highways and transport

5. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 12 August 2025

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

6. Progress Report on Matters Arising from the Minutes 12 August 2025

6.1 Painting of the Parish Benches – This was ongoing with 1 bench to be painted.

6.2 Lode Lane 20mph Signs – This was ongoing.

6.3 Trees on the allotment – This was ongoing.

6.4 NLOW small pond on the Recreation Ground – Cllr Hill would arrange a working party to clear the pond near the changing rooms at a similar time to the Pond Green pond.

6.5 War Memorial – the War Memorial Trust had suggested a lime based grout could be used. The clerk would contact some local companies for quotes on the repair and check with them that the suggested lime mortar is correct to use with granite.

6.6 Cross Green Parking – The posts had been installed. An additional post might be required which Cllr Pepper would install if it was felt this was needed.

6.7 Church Road Drains – Evidence of the flooding had been sent to Highways. Cllr Pepper had met with the neighbour most affected and had gathered further evidence of the blocked drain. The clerk would ask Cllr Hawker-Dawson to assist.

6.8 Facebook request for a dog park – The Parish Council had not yet received a proposal regarding a dog park.

6.9 Maids Head Bus Stop – Cllr Pepper had cleared the weeds and sprayed.

7. Planning Matters

7.1 G1 6x Ash/Sycamore self-set trees - Reduce to below the height of the cables above, but above the height of the fence line (2-4.5m), essentially pollarding the trees so they are retained but can be managed easily in the future, without the risk of damage to the cables.

5 Chapel Lane, Wicken. Ref 25/00915/TRE

The Parish Council had no objections.

7.2 This item had been brought forward and discussed earlier.

7.3 Update on Planning Applications Approve/Refused by ECDC

Approved/refused.

Approved

Infill and alterations to the existing pavilion and accessible ramp. The Pavillion, Chapel Lane, Wicken. Ref 25/00612/FUL

Three of the appeals on the land adjacent to 38A Chapel Lane had been approved on appeal. It was unsure which application would be chosen by the developers.

Refused

Conversion of garage to insulated garden room and accommodation. High Fen Farm House, Wicken. Ref25/00711/LBC and 25/00710/FUL

8. Neighbourhood Plan Update

The Neighbourhood Plan survey had been completed and circulated with a closing date of 15 September 2025. To date around 10% had been received. Further requests for completion would be circulated via social media and posters put up around the village. The Parish Council was keen to obtain a 30% return to ensure viability of the Plan.

9. Church Footpaths Quote

A quote had been received from James Home and Gardens for £360.00. Acceptance of the quote was proposed by Cllr Houghton and seconded by Cllr Cogan. All were in favour.

10. LHI Bid 2026/27 Projects to be Considered

The following projects were considered:

- Signs on Redit Lane and Back Lane for vehicles to take care due to pedestrians – there was limited space to site the signs.
- White lines and a stop sign near the corner of Drury Lane and Chapel Lane due to the predicted higher number of cyclists and pedestrians once the cycle path was open.
- Caution people crossing signs on the bend in the High Street where pedestrians crossed the road from Maids Head Green to Kingsway.

It was agreed that the LHI bid for 2026/27 would be the white lines and stop sign for the cycle path.

11. Repainting of the Cemetery Railings

The clerk had received a quote from James Home and Gardens. This was considered and it was felt that the quote did not cover the full amount of work needed. Cllr Pepper would draw up a scope of works and James Home and Gardens would be invited to resubmit a quote.

12. Speedwatch Data

The data from the Speedwatch cameras had been downloaded and analysed. The Parish Council were pleased to see that the average speed had reduced overall. The cameras would be moved further into the village for 1 month to obtain data from the centre of the village.

13. Mary Hatch Almshouses Nominated Trustee

The Parish Council thanked Sue Wilson for representing the Parish Council as a Trustee for a number of years. Cllr Cogan would take on the role.

14. Review of Rent Charge for Allotments of October 2026

It was agreed that the Afterway allotment annual rent should remain at £6 per annum due to the quality of the soil and the lack of water.

It was agreed that the annual rent for the Butts Lane allotments should rise from £20 per annum to £25 per annum with effect from October 2026.

Cllr Rogers left the meeting at 8.58pm.

15. Request by the Owners of 6 Butts Lane to Erect a Temporary Fence on the Allotment Roadway Adjacent to Their Property.

The request for a temporary fence to be erected whilst the current shed was demolished and replaced had been received. The request was for a timescale of 6 to 9 months. The Parish Council agreed the erection of the fence but requested it was for the least amount of time possible.

Cllr Rogers returned to the meeting at 9.03pm

16. Financial Matters

15.6 Bill payments

Rachel James	Clerk wages September 2025 with the backdated pay rise to April 2025	£806.55
HMRC	Employers PAYE	£206.80
Nest Pension	Employees Contribution	£20.56
Nest Pension	Employers Contribution	£15.42
HMRC NI	Employers NI for September 2025	£92.54
RH Landscapes	August cuts	£1392.00
Wave	Water bill 3.6.25 to 2.9.25 for the cemetery	£18.49
Les Yardy Fencing	Installation of fencing stakes on Cross Green	£504.00

16.2 Monthly Finance update

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

16.3 Bank Reconciliation to 30 August 2025

This had been circulated and noted.

17. Items for Information

The vehicle's short cut between Wicken and Soham was being damaged by the traffic for the new homes site. District Cllr Vellacott was following this up on behalf of Wicken. The clerk would write to Linden Homes.

Cllr Robinson would complete an update on the MUGA surface at the October meeting.

Cllrs Rogers and Hill would investigate the price of a Christmas tree for the green. This would be on the October agenda.

Cllr Cogan advised that the URA would be holding a picnic on the Upware Open Space for residents. The land along Stretham Road continued to be used for storage although assurances had been given to ECDC that this was temporary. The clerk would contact ECDC as a new access was being created on to Lower Road.

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 9.30pm

Minutes accepted as a true and correct copy.....