

## **WICKHAM MARKET PARTNERSHIP**

### **REPORT TO ANNUAL PARISH MEETING, 10<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2026**

The six Trustees, Josie Hopps, Cath Caudwell, Dick Jenkinson, Colin Owens, George Hering and Ray Lewis, continue to meet monthly to facilitate improvements to the village by way of small grants, helping organisations to achieve their goals and nurturing projects through to independence.

The trustees are supported by Karen Burrows our Administrative Assistant who usually works Tuesday mornings from the Resource Centre. Karen also manages the content for the weekly Round Robin email.

This financial year a grant was given to Pettistree Parochial Church Council for refurbishment works on their Parish Room to supplement a wide fund-raising campaign for improvements.

#### **Community Rooms**

The Partnership provides two rooms for meetings at the Resource Centre where Leiston Citizen's Advice offer weekly advice sessions, the Diabetic Retinal Screening Service hold clinics for patients and the Suffolk Police hold monthly police surgeries where residents can seek advice. Cruse Chiropractic is based in our treatment rooms. Recently a baby clinic has started using the rooms weekly to deliver their services. The meeting rooms are also available for bookings on an ad-hoc basis for meetings and events.

#### **Archive Centre**

The Archive Centre has produced its own report for the Annual Parish Meeting which covers its work and development for the past year.

#### **Wickham Market Shed**

The Partnership has been facilitating the development of The Wickham Market Shed since 2020 and this has now occupied the two portacabins behind the Village Hall since the summer of 2023. It continues to thrive, with a core group of members attending most weeks and others dropping in. There is a workshop, social space and store where members come together to chat and make or refurbish village items. Work has recently focussed on making wooden poppies for the Royal British Legion Centenary. Some members have been unwell this year but have continued to be supported through regular contact and offers of transport to the sessions. The social time at the end of the afternoon, with tea and cake, is equally important and looked forward to. The UK Men's Shed Association's vision to give people, and men in particular, a space to 'connect, create and converse' couldn't be more appropriate. Sessions currently take place on Monday afternoons between 2.00 and 4.00pm. You can find out more via [wmshedders@gmail.com](mailto:wmshedders@gmail.com) or by visiting the Shed website at [www.wmshed.org.uk](http://www.wmshed.org.uk)

#### **Village Marketing and Communication**

Wickham Market Website - As reported last year due to the ongoing costs of hosting and supporting the 'Visit Wickham Market' website discussions were ongoing with the Parish Council regards the transfer of responsibility. The willingness of the Parish Council to develop a new, easy to update and

manage website together with the inclusion of much of the existing content took place during the year, finalising in Autumn of 2025 with the successful launch of a brand-new website

The Round Robin weekly email newsletter produced by the partnership continues to provide a platform for contributions from village organisations and businesses. It currently has a circulation close to 500 subscribers who are kept informed of upcoming events and services in and around the village.

### **Library**

The provision of library services in Suffolk was formally transferred from Suffolk Library Services PLC to Suffolk County Council (SCC) on the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2025. The transition to SCC has gone reasonably smoothly with little or no impact on Library users. Front line staff and volunteers have moved across to the new organisation. The 'Friends' group are also continuing with their fundraising activities for the library and promoting the library within the community. They have held several recent events including a book sale, and an evening on researching ancestry. The Friends group have also been actively involved in the plan to build a small extension at the rear of the library to provide additional capacity and a quiet space. They now have funding secured and are currently in the process of gaining planning permission.

### **Resource Centre/Library Garden**

The Garden Team, led by Barbara Harrington, continue to work wonders in the Resource Centre/library garden. The team meet once or twice a month and are always looking for new helpers so please contact Barbara or the Partnership to find out more. And there's always cake and coffee/tea on offer. The Partnership provide funding should they need plants, etc.

### **Tennis Courts**

The Partnership installed the tennis courts in Orchard Place in 2009 and this year has received two grant awards. One from the Sizewell C Community Fund for £8780 which covered the cost of completely refurbishing the courts and included £500 for tennis equipment for the Primary School. The second was for £1634 from East Suffolk Council Outdoor Playspace Fund which covered fencing repairs and some new nets. Pay and Play sessions can be booked online or via the Library at a cost of £5 per court per hour.

### **Repair of Milepost**

In September 2025 the Partnership funded the repair of the milepost in the north of the village which was completed by a small group of local residents.