

WICKHAM MARKET PARISH COUNCIL

3 Year Business Plan

May 2026 – May 2029



1. Wickham Market Parish Council vision

- 1.1. Wickham Market Parish Council aims to provide a positive and reliable organisation to meet the needs of the parish through active communication.
- 1.2. It seeks to promote, maintain and improve a good quality of life by using knowledge of the needs of groups and individuals within the parish and by making efficient and positive use of its income.
- 1.3. This business plan focuses on activities to support the Parish and the Neighbourhood Plan. These activities should also consider other agreed strategies such as the Climate Action Strategy and the Biodiversity Strategy

2. About the Council

- 2.1. Wickham Market Parish Council is the first tier of local government closest to the community, with an important role to play in promoting the parish by representing its interests. Within its limited remit, it provides and monitors efficient services and amenities to meet local need, influences other decision makers and strives to improve the quality of parish life. The council represents the views of its community to improve or provide cost effective services and amenities.
- 2.2. Residents have the opportunity to elect 13 parish councillors every four years. The Council elects a Chair and a Vice-Chair annually in May. Councillors are unpaid and receive no allowance for their duties other than travel costs for duties beyond the parish. Details of all councillors are published at <https://wickhammarket-pc.gov.uk/parish-council/councillors/>

3. Operating framework

- 3.1. The Parish Council will carry out its statutory duties as required by:
 - Meeting regularly through year to manage the business of the Council. These meetings operate within the Council Standing Orders. One of these meetings will be the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council at which the Chair for the coming year will be elected. All full Council meetings are open to the public with a period set aside for members of the public to address the Council. The meetings take place in Wickham Market Village Hall to allow good access and adequate meeting space.
 - The Council has its own Standing Orders and Financial Regulations which lay down the rules by which it operates and conducts business. Council's Standing Orders are based on a model prepared by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC).
 - All Parish Councillors are expected to adhere to the Code of Conduct 2020 which will also apply to the Council's Committees. Working Groups upon which the Parish Council are represented are expected to work to terms of reference agreed in full Council.
 - The Council will facilitate the holding of an Annual Parish Meeting between 1st March and 1st June each year to review the activities of the previous year and give an opportunity for residents to raise issues of concern. If in attendance, the Chair of the Parish Council will preside over the meeting.
 - The Parish Council aims to promote the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the Parish and to contribute to a sustainable and inclusive community.

4. Business Plan Objectives

4.1. Parish benefit

To represent Wickham Market Parishioners and to improve the facilities and infrastructure within Wickham Market. This will be achieved by being a professional and competent Parish Council, which is open and accountable and ensures sound financial management of Parish Council resources.

4.2. Village administration

To ensure the ongoing administration of Wickham Market Parish and the facilitation of the Parish Council's activities. Be a good and fair employer by providing fulfilling work opportunities and conditions for staff. Continue to seek and improve established channels of communication and find new ways of engaging and communicating with the residents of Wickham Market.

4.3. Council development

To provide the Chair, Vice-Chair, Councillors, the Parish Clerk and Deputy Clerk with the education and knowledge to enable them to contribute to the advancement and improvement of Wickham Market Parish. To ensure Councillors have the opportunity to keep abreast of new opportunities and policies. To improve Council services to the public by encouraging members and staff to develop their skills through appropriate training.

4.4. Financial planning and control

To ensure the ongoing financial viability of Wickham Market Parish Council and provide high quality, efficient, cost effective and sustainable services. To ensure the Financial Budget is monitored on a regular basis to ensure any anomalies are highlighted to the Parish Council for appropriate action. A financial report will be presented to the full Council at each meeting.

4.5. Strategic planning/Key projects

To ensure Wickham Market Parish Council has a long-range plan for the future the following objectives will be included in the Parish Council's 3-year Business Plan.

- Work with County and District Councils to ensure the maintenance Public Footpaths.
- Improvement of communication and engagement by the Parish Council using our new social media accounts: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Next Door together with Wickham Market Parish News, our bimonthly parish magazine
- To continue to address concerns over speeding by managing our four Speed Indicator Devices (SID), collating data and using this to support requests for additional traffic calming measures via Suffolk Highways and Suffolk Constabulary. Continue to press for 20 mph speed limit implementation to increase safety and make village more pleasant for residents and visitors..
- Continue to improve plans for traffic calming measures by working with Sizewell C and influencing mitigation measures for the additional expected 1,000 vehicles per day.
- Ensure that the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) income is spent on projects that have been identified as providing, improving, replacing, operating or maintaining infrastructure that supports the development of the Parish Council's area or anything else concerned with addressing the demands that development places on the area. Input to the discussions regarding infrastructure required within the village will also be received from Council's Committees.

5. Communication and Engagement

5.1. To provide a channel of communication for the views and expressions of the local community and to be responsive to it needs and aspirations. The Parish Council will continue to develop use of social media, improve the website and develop the parish magazine to encourage feedback from residents.

6. Wickham Market Parish Council Committees and Groups

6.1. Finance and General Purpose Committee

Reviews financial information ahead of presentation to the full council. Has delegated powers to approve payments. Reviews governance documents and processes for effectiveness

6.2. The Planning Committee

The Parish Council is a statutory consultee in the East Suffolk Planning process. All planning applications within the Parish of Wickham Market are examined and commented on by this group on behalf of Wickham Market Parish Council. The Planning committee has been granted full-delegated powers to make Council decision regarding responses to the appropriate authorities.

6.3. Staffing and Personnel Committee

Advises the council on all staffing matters and acts as line management for the Parish Clerk

6.4. Sizewell C Committee

Keeps the council apprised of all developments with the project to build a new nuclear power station at Sizewell. Advises on issues and mitigations available.

6.5. The Village Hall Modernisation Committee

Raising funds and managing the process of modernising the village hall to create a good quality and versatile community space

6.6. The Climate Change Working Group

Formed as a direct response to the Parish Council taking steps to address the growing climate emergency and in recognition of the need to protect the environment. The Parish Council has adopted a Climate Action Strategy which commits the Parish Council to embedding green awareness in its policy and organisational development. Central to this is the need to raise awareness of the climate crisis within the community and to encourage groups to come together to take action in achieving the Suffolk County Council target of being carbon neutral by 2030.

6.7. Emergency Plan Working Group

Creating and publishing plans to manage a range of emergencies

Wickham Market Parish Council action plan for 2026-29

Objective and Alignment	Action	Timescale	Estimated Cost	Priority 1,2,3 or quick win, just do it
1. Mitigate the risk of loss of employees (Village Administration)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support employees with their work Provide more volunteer help with large activities such as seasonal markets Ensure that employees work is understood clearly to support recruitment 	Ongoing		
2. Ensure new councillors have the skills to be effective. (Parish Benefit)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify new councillors existing skills. From Skill sets, identify training needs. Book appropriate training courses. 	Ongoing	400	1
3. Add Maintenance of village gateways to Grounds Maintenance (Parish Benefit)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include grass cutting around village gateways to improve village presentation (northern gateway added to schedule in 2025) Consider gateway flower or shrub borders. (Ask SZC or gardening club?) 		500	2
4. Make the Cemetery cost neutral. (Financial Planning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenge running costs and reduce low priority work – In Progress Identify improvement works that will reduce ongoing costs. (Improvements so far have reduced grass cutting costs by over £3,500 every year going forward) 	2025-26		1
5. Improve community engagement. (Community Engagement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve parish website. Delivered Oct 25 Identify further opportunities for community engagement 	2026	£2k In Budget 26-27	1
6. Provide support for volunteers (Community Engagement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage volunteers more effectively to achieve desired end results Celebrate volunteering in the community Provide a framework for volunteering including training, risk assessments and insurance Completed 2025 	2026		1
7. Encourage more people to join the council (Community Engagement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote Council responsibilities and achievements through published reviews Engage with the community at events and markets to encourage more members Use volunteering schemes as a step towards being a volunteer Councillor Annual Review in the magazine 		Minimal	1
8. Maintain and improve public footpaths. (Strategic planning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrange regular maintenance of key footpaths (Little Lane & FP009 done for 2025) Create better signposted walks (Simon?) 			1

Specific improvements	Lay a permeable hard surface to the path between George Lane and Crown Lane on the western side of Glebe Allotments (see map). This would support those with mobility aide or children to avoid the very narrow pavement from the Hill to the George. All options to be evaluated	2026	New path with hard surface	1 or 2
9. Improve children's play area to make is more accessible during the winter. (Parish Benefit)	Complete maintenance of existing equipment Lay all weather surfacing around each piece of equipment. Provide hard surface access paths Task & Finish WG - Questionnaire	2026 £15.5k in reserves	£14k	1
10. Manage speeding through the village. (Key Projects)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage and report data. • Share with Suffolk highways and Suffolk constabulary. • Push for the implementation of a 20mph zone within the village centre 	2026		1
11. Coordinate mitigation work with Sizewell C (Strategic Planning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to liaise closely with EDF (Sizewell owner) • Continue to push for mitigation work. – In progress • 	2026	No cost to WMPC	1
12. Drive plans to modernise the village hall. (Strategic Planning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage the design and delivery of a fully modernised village hall • Apply to social fund for support with the village hall – In progress 			1
13. Create a Village Hall Business Plan (Strategic Planning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance the business plan to support a modernised facility • Support the Village Hall Management team by removing administrative burdens 	2026	minimal	2
14. Manage adequate car parking in the village centre (Parish Benefit)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review current village hall parking space available • Consider options for extending parking space • Resolve flooding issues at car park (Part of VH modernisation phase 2) • Further options for village centre need to be investigated 	Not in 26-27 budget	Significant Cost Grants will be needed	2
15. Promote the village as a destination (Parish Benefit)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve social media presence with parish events Continue to use the parish magazine and website to promote organisations and events 	Increase resources Pay overlay £5k	£2k-£3k	1
16. Encourage more social events (Community Engagement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capitalise on opportunities to create social events for the village • Support other event organisers through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ attendance at their events, ▪ offering organisational support (example: supported Suffolk Animal Rescue fun day with WMPC Gazebos) ▪ Offering grant support 	Resources are the constraint £3k In Budget 26-27	Perhaps £3k-£5k?	2

17. Climate Action (Strategic Planning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to develop Climate related strategies Consider the effect on climate as part of WMPC decision making Improve climate action communication by publishing minutes from the Climate Action Working Group Finalise a Biodiversity Strategy for the Parish 	Ongoing	minimal	1
18. Coordinate mitigation work to reduce the flood risk (Parish Benefit)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with SCC Highways, Environment Agency and landowners to press for mitigation measures Update the public as necessary 	Ongoing	minimal	
19. Manage Playing Field boundaries (Parish Benefit)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Playing Field: Crown lift some of the trees and create a dead hedge in front of the trunks. The grass could be cut but perhaps not as short as the pitch. It could provide a sheltered walking or exercise area for the many users and the dead hedge would protect the wildlife corridor behind it. 	In Budget 26-27	£2k - £3k?	1 / 2
20. Request asset transfers. (key projects)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With Local Government Reorganisation on the horizon, consider if there is any land that WMPC might like to have transferred from the existing county or district councils. SX Playing Field from SCC: Agreed The Hill car park area from ESC. To be considered Percy Mason but not toilets; to be considered. Chapel Lane CP: no 	2026		1
21. Cycle path Wickham Market rail station (Strategic planning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cycle path between Wickham Market and Wickham Market rail station. 		Probably too expensive	3
22. Market Square Improvements (Parish Benefit)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Also make Market Square- The Hill into a more attractive and safer environment, cobbled road strips, clearer car park entry/exits and additional bench seats with backrests suitable for relaxing. More pleasant surroundings will encourage further businesses. 		Significant cost	2
23. Adult outdoor Gym (Key projects)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider some gym machines at the top of the playing field similar to the ones in Aldeburgh as it might benefit the older children and young adults. 		£5k-£8k	2
24. Walking for Wellbeing Group (Community Engagement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walking group. for well-being/inclusion/loneliness direction rather than a Ramblers type approach. Simon hopes to move this on in 2026 by getting stakeholders engaged (Wellbeing Cafe/Good 	2026	minimal	2

	Neighbours/Social Prescribing/Archive Centre etc)			
25. Fitness and wellbeing classes (Community Engagement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A course on yoga that is for all abilities (including seated only) and free to attend. If we could fund things like this that are beneficial to health and wellbeing but people can't always access. 	2026	Agree Funding £2k-£3k In Budget 26-27	1
26. Business Forum (Community Engagement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A business forum or something like a Chamber of Commerce? Might be good to have a business group as a consultee for any WMPC initiatives. Entrepreneur and Business Owner Support Group with an evening drop-in on the last Friday of the month at the George, upstairs. 	In Hand Leanne engaged with this	Grants available	1
27. Communication Strategy (Community Engagement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A short-term task and finish working group to devise a communication and engagement strategy for WMPC in relation to SZC, VH, CC, SX allotment site and perhaps our 3 year business plan. 	2026	minimal	1
28. Neighbourhood Watch (Parish Benefit)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up a neighbourhood watch scheme which may help with the spate of vandalism throughout the village 	2026	minimal	1
29. Youth Facilities (Parish Benefit)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving Youth and Play facilities. Set up a task and finish working group to assess what would help and support its delivery 		TBC	2
30. Business as usual:	<p>BAU is managed through existing processes and job descriptions including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting schedules Grant awarding Statutory obligations Transparency Financial Management and audits Asset management 	Throughout the year		

This business plan will be reviewed annually in September in preparation for the detailed budget for the following year to be set in December.