

UNAPPROVED DRAFT1

Widford Parish Council

Minutes of the Widford Parish Council Ordinary Meeting
Tuesday 2nd September 2025 at 7.30pm in Widford Village Hall



PRESENT: Cllr Mike Allen (MA) Chair; Cllr Ian Collins (IC); Cllr Mark Rome (MR);
Cllr Josh Warren (JW)

Six members of the public

Clerk: Colin Marks, Clerk to the Parish Council

The Chairman welcomed everyone and opened the meeting at 7.35pm.

ACTION

25.076 To receive and approve apologies for absence

1. Councillors: None
2. Others: None

25.077 Declarations of Interest and requests for dispensations

1. Interests

None declared. Noted: Cllr Mike Allen has an interest in Playing Field matters, being a trustee. Noted: Cllr Ian Collins has a DPI because his wife has the Closed Churchyard maintenance contract.

2. Dispensation requests:

None

25.078 Approval of Minutes

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 1st July 2025 are a true and accurate record. The Chairman signed the Minutes

Clerk/MA

25.079 Police report

1. The police report for July was received and noted for Widford and neighbouring parishes:
WIDFORD: No reported crimes
WARESIDE: 1 x Residential Burglary – Suspect apprehended at the time; 2 x Business burglary; 1 x Burglary unconnected building; 2 x Criminal damage; 1 x Theft
HUNSDON: No reported crimes
MUCH HADHAM: 1 x Residential Burglary
2. Police priority September to December: No report received

25.080 Chairman's announcements

The Chairman said that the Archive Policy is being formalised and will be discussed later in the meeting.

MA

The Playing Field maintenance contractor has been asked to quote for cutting Benningfield Green when attending to the playing field – quote anticipated but not yet received.

Speeding through the village remains a problem and it is concerning that nothing can be done until there is a serious accident.

25.081 Reports by County and District Councillors

No reports received

25.082 Planning

1. New Applications:

3/25/1032/HH	1 Lilley Wood Lane: Erection of outbuilding to replace original RESOLVED: No objections	
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Clerk

2. Decision Notices. For information only, the following were noted:

3/25/1051/LBC	Widford JMI School: Replacement roof; raac removal and other works.	GRANTED
3/25/1012/HH	The Croft, Nether Street: Close boarded boundary fence.	Awaited
3/25/0815/FUL	Access off Medcalf Hill: Improvements and temporary upgrades to an existing agricultural access off Medcalf Hill (B1004).	Awaited
3/25/0901/OUT	Priory Farm: Outline application with all matters reserved except access for the demolition of the Doe Shed and erection of single self-build dwelling and associated infrastructure.	Awaited
3/25/0808/FUL	Priory Farm Land East Of The B180: Creation of a new agricultural access and stopping up of the existing access for vehicles.	GRANTED
3/25/0460/FUL 3/25/0461/LBC	Priory Farm Barns: Conversion and partial re-building of agricultural buildings into two residential dwellings; alterations to fenestration and openings; landscaping and carparking.	Awaited
3/25/0480/OUT	Land South of Levenage Lane: Outline planning for 8 houses.	Awaited
3/25/0231/FUL	Wilmoor: Demolition of outbuilding. Erection of dwelling incorporating air source heat pump, landscaping and creation of access.	Awaited
3/25/0182/FUL	Youngs Little Acre: Retention of a welfare unit and a turkey preparation and storage building.	REFUSED
3/24/1031/HH	Ashbourne Manor: Extension to single storey garage	REFUSED
3/24/1495/FUL	Land at Bourne Lane : APPEALED. On behalf of the Council, the Chairman submitted further objections to the Planning Inspectorate via the Inspectorate's portal	Awaited

3. Other planning matters, including items received too late for the agenda:

1. **Late applications:** None
2. **3/24/1495/FUL: Appealed.** See 25.082.2 above
3. **Land for sale and Bourne Lane access.** Ongoing concerns regarding the land and access in question were noted. It was agreed to keep this as a running agenda item until the matter is resolved.

25.083 Finance

1. Report of the Council's accounts at 31st July 2025

Finance Summary to 31st July	£
Opening cashbook balance 1st June	39,581.34
Plus: income to 31 st July	255.61
Minus: expenditure to 31 st July	<u>2,692.25</u>
Balance available to Council at 31st July (cashbook balance)	37,144.70
Unpresented cheques/payments	<u>0.00</u>
Bank balance: reconciled with bank statement at 31st July	<u>37,144.70</u>

RESOLVED: that the Accounts Statement to 31st July 2025 be approved.

2. Bank reconciliation 31st July 2025

Cashbook balance £37,144.70 Unity Bank balance £37,144.70

RESOLVED: to agree the bank reconciliation as presented

3. Performance vs budget at 31st July 2025

The Clerk's detailed report on the performance vs budget to 31st July was received.

Income: Budget £18,565 Performance to 31st July £9,006

Expenditure: Budget £29,962 Performance to 31st July £7,567

The income/expenditure surplus to 31st July is £1,439 against -£11,397 deficit budgeted.

Summary: Opening bank balance 01/04/25 £35,939
Income to 31/07/25 £ 9,006
Expenditure to 31/07/25 £ 7,573 net (excl VAT)
VAT to be reclaimed £ 227
Bank balance 31/07/25 £37,145

RESOLVED: The performance report to 31st July be accepted as presented.

4. List of payments.

RESOLVED: to approve the list of payments as presented by the Clerk

Clerk

All expenditure made under the General Power of Competence.

		Gross	VAT incl
Sharon Collins	Closed churchyard 4 of 4 August	310.00	
Mrs J English	Litter picking August	150.00	
Clerk	Salary August (incl National wage award)	557.56	
HMRC	PAYE	139.60	
HMRC	Employer's NIC	42.02	
Unity Trust Bank	Service charge August	6.00	
Mrs J English	Litter picking September	310.00	
Clerk	Salary September approx. TBC	495.50	
HMRC	PAYE approx. TBC	123.90	
HMRC	Employer's NIC approx. TBC	28.30	
Clerk	Expenses August/September	18.65	
Recoverable VAT included			£ Nil

5. Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)

The Clerk reported that PKF Littlejohn have acknowledged the parish council's exempt status and that since no enquiries were received relating to the exercise of public rights, no further action is required for the 2024/25 AGAR.

Clerk

25.084 Correspondence: The list of correspondence was noted as it appeared on the Agenda:

- Parishioner: Nether Street kissing gate near to collapse (25.086.1.2)
- Parishioner: request to support planning appeal objection (25.082.2)
- Cllr Eric Buckmaster: County position on flags on lamp posts

25.085 Village Reports

1. Village Hall

1. No issues to report. The next pub night is on 19th September. The September cheese & wine night has been cancelled due to lack of interest.

2. Playing Field

1. The Chairman reported that the grass and hedges continue to be maintained satisfactorily. The upgrading of the play area is still under consideration.

MA

3. Allotments

1. No issues to report.
2. The feasibility laying on of mains water is still being investigated.

IC

4. Closed Churchyard.

1. No issues to report.
2. Boundary wall: The Clerk confirmed that maintenance of the boundary walls are the responsibility of the Parish Council, except for the 16th century West wall that

IC

	separates the churchyard from the Catholic cemetery. It is believed that the lychgate is also excluded from the Parish Council's responsibility. The Clerk gave the closed churchyard file of historical documents to the Chairman, including precept agreements and maintenance grants made under earlier District Council administrations that may or may not still be relevant.	MA/Clerk
25.086	Highways, Footpaths and byways	
	1. Footpaths and PRow.	
	1. FP1; Stile replacement remains to be actioned by Nicholas Maddex.	IC
	2. Nether Street kissing gate: Repairs to one gate have been completed, but another gate has now been reported as having a rotten post. To be reported to Nicholas Maddex for attention.	IC
	3. Footpath gate and ditch: Organisation of the necessary work is to be undertaken while the weather is still favourable.	IC/MA
	2. Highways and footways	
	1. Update on Enforcement issues by Greenacres: No progress noted. To remain on the agenda for monitoring and to consider seeking an in person meeting with the Planning Enforcement officer.	MA
	2. Other parish matters and concern	
	1. Defibrillator management. All ok. The Clerk confirmed that reports are logged on the Community Heartbeat Trust WebNos system when he receives them from Babs Edwards.	Clerk
	2. Chalk stream improvements. The Chairman reported that the work has now been completed and all is looking very good.	MA
25.087	Village Archive	
	1. Archive Policy: Archivist Helen Giles and PCC member Dinah Findley submitted comments and amendments to the Parish Council's draft policy. RESOLVED: to incorporate the comments and amendments.	Clerk
	2. Archive Loan agreement WPC/PCC. The draft agreement was approved in principle and the PCC would like it in place by the November PC meeting if possible. RESOLVED: That the Clerk sign the agreement subject to it first being submitted to the NALC legal team for comments. The final version to be ratified at the November PC meeting.	Clerk
	3. Archive wish list. The estimate for the "wish list" for the archive storage units was considered. It was agreed that funding set aside for the playing field and verge clearance could be transferred to the archive since both projects are in the interest of the village. It was also noted that it would be advantageous for the Parish Council to purchase the storage units since the VAT would then be recoverable (which would not be possible if purchased by a third party). The Clerk agreed to incorporate some suggestions into the 2026/27 draft budget that will be considered in November.	Clerk
25.088	Benningfield Green	
	1. Annual licence renewal. RESOLVED: That the licence fee for 2025/26 be increased by the July RPI of 4.2%.	Clerk
	2. Grass maintenance. The Chairman reported that he had asked the Playing Field contractor to quote for cutting the Green. Quote will be circulated to members when it is received.	MA
25.089	Change to .gov.uk domain and email address. The Clerk reported that the changes have already been made for the website and the Clerk's email address. Councillors' new email addresses and passwords have been given them and it is now for members to set up their	ALL

new email accounts. The Clerk said that TEEC/MyParishCouncil readily offer assistance if there are any difficulties. The Clerk agreed to send an update for the village magazine.

Clerk

- 25.090 Urgent matters** received too late for inclusion on this agenda:
None received.

The meeting was not for public comments.

25.091 Items for future agendas:

Clerk

1. 2026/27 draft budget (November meeting)
2. Archive storage expense

25.092 Date of next meeting

1. Ordinary Parish Council Meeting Tuesday November 4th at 7.30pm in the Village Hall

Clerk/MA

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.52pm.

Signed.....Dated.....

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