

UNAPPROVED DRAFT1

Widford Parish Council

**Minutes of the Widford Parish Council Ordinary Meeting
Tuesday 27th January 2025 at 7.30pm in Widford Village Hall**



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

Three members of the public, County Cllr Eric Buckmaster

Clerk: Colin Marks, Clerk to the Parish Council

The Chairman welcomed everyone and opened the meeting at 7.30pm.

ACTION

26.001 To receive and approve apologies for absence

1. Councillors: None – all present
2. Others: Neighbourhood police; Gilda Deterding;

26.002 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

26.003 Approval of Minutes

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 18th November 2025 are a true and accurate record. The Chairman signed the Minutes

**Clerk/
MA**

26.004 Police report

The police report for December was received and noted for Widford and neighbouring parishes:

WIDFORD: No reported crimes
WARESIDE: 1 x residential burglary (abandoned property)
HUNSDON: No reported crimes
MUCH HADHAM: 1 x theft

26.005 Chairman's announcements

The Chairman said he had no announcements to make, but hoped everyone had enjoyed the Christmas season.

MA

26.006 Reports by County and District Councillors

No District report received.

County Cllr Eris Buckmaster's written report was received and is included as an appendix to these Minutes. Cllr Buckmaster drew attention to items including the Traffic Management Strategy, the HCC budget, road maintenance, the cost of Social Care as a proportion of the County budget, cost constraints affecting SEND, and local Flood Management schemes. He also said that he was supporting increased signage at the old railway bridge where regular accidents continue to be an issue. In response to this, a comment was made that it appears no matter how much indication is given of the dangers posed by the sharp bend, drivers continue to approach the bend at a speed from which they cannot keep control.

Cllr Buckmaster also reported that he had attended the recent Rural Police Forum where fly tipping and hare coursing were recognised as ongoing criminal activity.

26.007 Planning

1. New Applications:

NONE	
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2. Decision Notices. For information only, the following were noted:

3/25/1455/HH	15 Benningfield Road: Two storey side and single storey rear extension, front porch extension, removal of chimney and installation of permeable driveway.	GRANTED
3/25/0231/FUL	Wilmoor: Demolition of outbuilding. Erection of dwelling, landscaping and creation of access.	GRANTED
3/25/0182/FUL	Youngs Little Acre: Retention of a welfare unit and a turkey preparation building. APPEALED Ref 25/00060/REFUSE <i>It was agreed that the Clerk get more information about the enforcement action that is being implemented.</i>	APPEAL DISMISSED
3/24/1495/FUL	Land at Bourne Lane : APPEALED Ref 25/00043/REFUSE	Appeal 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
3/25/0480/OUT	Land South of Levenage Lane: Outline planning for 8 houses.	Awaited
PL/0470/25 (CC0480)	Widford JMI: Replacement roof to modern part of the building in order to remove RAAC and associated alterations to the roof etc	GRANTED

Clerk

1. Other planning matters, including items received too late for the agenda: **NONE**

1. Late applications: NONE
2. Land for sale and Bourne Lane access. Ongoing concerns and action regarding the land and access in question. Keep this as a running agenda item until the matter is resolved.

26.008 Finance

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

Finance Summary to 31 st December	£
Opening cashbook balance 30 th September	44,279.68
Plus: income to 31 st December	265.65
Minus: expenditure to 31 st December	<u>6,399.97</u>
Balance available to Council at 31st December (cashbook balance)	38,145.36
Unpresented cheques/payments	<u>0.00</u>
Bank balance: reconciled with bank statement at 31st December	<u>38,145.36</u>

RESOLVED: that the Accounts Statement to 31st December 2025 be approved as presented..

2. Bank reconciliation 31st December 2025

Cashbook balance £38,145.36 Unity Bank balance £38,145.36

RESOLVED: to agree the bank reconciliation as presented.

3. Performance vs budget at 31st December 2025

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

Income: Budget £18,565 Performance to 31st Dec £18,436

Expenditure: Budget £29,962 Performance to 31st Dec £15,972

The income/expenditure surplus to 31st Dec is £1,614 against -£11,397 deficit budgeted.

Summary: Opening cashbook balance 01/04/25	£35,939
Cashbook Income to 31/12/25 Gross	£18,436
Cashbook Expenditure to 31/12/25 Gross	<u>£16,230</u>
Cashbook balance 31/12/25	<u>£38,145</u>

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

Itemised details of the 2025/26 performance against the budget may be viewed on the Parish Council website, <https://widfordparishcouncil.gov.uk>

4. Budget and Precept 2026/27

The Council considered the budget and precept proposal for 2026/27 that was presented by the Clerk. This also contained a forecast for 2027/28 and 2028/29.

The 2026/27 budget income was agreed at £1,025.

The precept was set at £18,375, which is a 5% increase on the £17,500 for 2025/26.

Therefore the total budget income is £19,400.

The 2026/27 budget expenditure was agreed at £29,665 net of reclaimable VAT

The forecast bank balance at year-end 31st March 2026 is £30,283

The forecast bank balance at year-end 31st March 2027 is £20,018

The budget includes extraordinary expenditure for purchasing and setting up the new Archive in the church and related set up and ongoing archivist costs totalling c. £7,500

The budget also includes £450 increased audit costs, £7,850 various village maintenance costs, including litter picking and verge maintenance, and £2,400 in grants to parish related causes.

Itemised details of the budget may be viewed on the Parish Council website, <https://widfordparishcouncil.gov.uk>

RESOLVED: To approve the 2026/27 budget and precept as presented. The Clerk, Chairman, Clerk and two councillors signed the EHC precept form.

5. List of payments.

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

All expenditure made under the General Power of Competence.

		Gross	VAT incl
Rackline Ltd	Archive cabinets pro forma 50% deposit	2,878.20	
Clerk	Salary December	495.60	
HMRC	PAYE	123.80	
HMRC	Employer's NIC	30.36	
Mrs J English	Litter picking December	150.00	
Unity Trust Bank	Service charge December	6.00	
Mrs J English	Litter picking January	150.00	
Clerk reimburse	SLCC Membership 1/3rd	84.33	
Helen Giles reimburse	Archive Find My Past annual subs	169.99	
Helen Giles reimburse	Archive Google Play annual subs	79.99	
Clerk	Expenses December/January	18.65	
Clerk	Salary January	495.40	
HMRC	PAYE	124.00	
HMRC	Employer's NIC	30.36	
Helen Giles reimburse	Archive Preservation Equipment Ltd	111.30	18.55
Helen Giles reimburse	Archive eHive annual subs	92.10	
TEEC Ltd	Hosting website annual fee	194.39	32.40
Widford Village Hall	7 Council meetings 2026	182.00	
Unity Trust Bank	Service charge January	6.00	
Recoverable VAT included			£ 50.95

26.009 Village Archive

1. Rackline order update: 50% deposit has been paid to secure the quoted price. It is with the PCC to advise Rackline when delivery can be received, anticipated to be sometime in the Spring.

2. Update on other Archive costs etc from Archivist Helen Giles:

1. Archive Event

The *Back to Skool* event takes place on Saturday, the 7th of February at the Village Hall, featuring panels on the school's history (using information from the archive and the school's archive), tables of photographs, a table of items from Epping Forest District Museum for handling, crafts, activities, and refreshments. I have also recorded memories of former pupils and teachers; these will be available to listen to at the event and will later be added to the Widford Archive as digital files. This event is made possible with funding from the Friends of Widford Church.

2. Parish Council funding support

In addition to the annual support from the council, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the Parish Council for providing additional funding for the following to take place this year:

Cataloguing of the Widford Archive

Budget: £4,500, Spent to date: £0

The archive has never been catalogued fully (only partially digitised). Cataloguing it will ensure we know what we have and where it is. This is really important, especially as the archive moves to its new home in the Church vestry and becomes more accessible to people. This has not started yet, but time has been set aside for this to begin soon.

Collections Management Software

Budget: £90 per year, spent to date: £90

This is to enable cataloguing. The software is a secure, web-based programme called E-hive, used by museums and galleries worldwide.

Equipment and materials

Budget: £1,430, spent to date: £113

An Accessions Register and some archival labels have been purchased so far to aid with cataloguing the collection.

The Rackline storage units (for the archive in the church are also on order, although this is being handled by Dinah Findlay, as it relates specifically to the Church project.

3. Widford News articles

The archive is used monthly for Widford News magazine articles. This will continue this year, with plans to also share the articles on the Widford Community Group Facebook page for residents who don't receive the magazine.

Helen Giles, Archivist - January 2026

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

- Station bridge wall accident
- Places for People invitation to join the Gilston CWG workshop for Villages 5 and 6 (26.007.3.3)
- Letter from Chris Hinchliffe MP re the Government's position on road safety proactive measures (26.012.2.3)

26.011 Village Reports

1. Village Hall

1. No issues to report. The small hall is currently being redecorated.

2. Playing Field

1. The Chairman reported that the annual Boxing Day hockey match was a great success, being very well attended and raised about £175. The recently grass cut provided an excellent playing surface. The Chairman made an appeal for volunteers

MA

to step forward to join the Playing Field Management Committee, which is currently reduced to just two members.

3. Allotments

1. There were no issues to report.
2. The feasibility laying on of mains water continues to be investigated. The cost of making a formal application for a quote is £213, with the anticipated cost being around £17k. There is no suitable access nearby that would enable a metered spur to be fitted; the pipe would have to be run from Benningfield Road. The Parish Council said it would consider paying for the application, but all other costs would be down to an allotments committee. The ongoing cost of the water supply would also have to be taken into consideration, the Clerk advising that other parish councils typically pay £400-£500 a year for allotments water. Cllr Ian Collins has asked that someone else take on the allotments portfolio in May. IC

4. Closed Churchyard.

1. No issues to report. The wall/fence in the south-west corner will need to be tidied. IC/MA

26.012 Highways, Footpaths and byways

1. Footpaths and PRow.

1. Allotments footpath gate and ditch: Work remains to be done; a working party will be formed when the weather improves in the Spring. Cllr Andy Djemal offered his help. IC

2. Highways and footways

1. Update on Enforcement issues by Greenacres: No update on the situation. MA
2. Another accident at the old railway bridge was noted; referred to in 26.006 - Cllr Eric Buckmaster's report above.
3. Noted: The letter from Chris Hinchliffe MP re the Government's position that proactive road safety measures should be considered by the Highways Authority and that the local authorities have the power and the funding to carry out interventions to mitigate accident risk.

The Clerk was asked to write to HCC to press for the illegal access close at Bourne Lane close to the B1004 junction to be addressed and the kerb reinstated. Clerk

3. Other parish matters and concern

1. **Defibrillator management.** No issues raised

26.013 Benningfield Green

1. Grass maintenance has been agreed. MA
2. No parking issues to report

26.014 Change to .gov.uk domain and email address. The Chairman said his new address has been set up. Cllr Ian Collins asked the Clerk to raise a ticket with TEEC on his behalf since he can't get access, having crashed the system. Cllr Josh Warren asked the Clerk to resend him the setting up procedure. ALL
Clerk
Clerk

26.015 Urgent matters and other matters received too late for inclusion on this agenda:

- The white Nether Street railings have again been damaged, creating an obvious safety risk, and they need to be repaired asap. It was noted that if the railings were steel rather than cast iron, they would be much easier and cheaper to repair. Cllr Eric Buckmaster to be involved in taking this forward with HCC, who own the railings. The railings are unprotected but are identified in the 2011 Conservation Area Appraisal (page 26) as making an important architectural and historic contribution to the street scene. Clerk/
MA

The meeting suspended at 8.27pm for public comments.

No comments were made and the meeting was restored to order at 8.28pm

26.016 Items for future agendas: None raised Clerk

26.017 Date of next meetings – all in the Village Hall

Ordinary Parish Council Meeting Tuesday March 3rd at 7.30pm

April 7th Annual Parish Electorate (not a Parish Council meeting); May 5th; July 7th;
September 8th; November 3rd; January 5th 2027

**Clerk/
MA**

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.30pm.

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

APPENDIX A

E Buckmaster County Councillor Report January 2026

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Eric Buckmaster January 2026

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