

WESTHORPE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 19 May 2026 in the Village Hall at 7.30pm.

PRESENT: Cllrs David Barker (Chair), Martin Brown, Richard Brown, Steve Caley (Vice Chair), Steve Christian, Diane Gladders and Robin Lambert, Ginny O'Hegarty (Clerk), County Cllr James Patchett, District Cllr Andy Mellen, and six members of the public.

1. Apologies and approval of absences. None received.
2. Minutes of the previous Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 20 May 2025 had been approved and signed on 23 September 2025.
3. Annual report of the Parish Council. The Chairman presented the report outlining the issues discussed at the Parish Council meetings over the past year including speeding, ongoing concerns regarding flooding, damaged 30mph repeater signs, and the difficulties faced with the provision of a neighbourhood plan. The Chairman thanked the Councillors, Clerk and Cllr Mellen for their time and commitment in looking after the interests of the residents of Westhorpe. A copy of the report is available on Westhorpe Parish Council's website.
4. Suffolk County Councillor Annual Report. Cllr Mellen introduced new County Cllr James Patchett and reported that the new reorganisation is going ahead although the new administration will be challenging it. Library services were brought back over the past year, and the Government rated the roads in Suffolk as red, however there were insufficient funds available to repair them. Cllr Patchett reported that the new administration was not yet fully formed and that he was elected as the Green Party spokesman for flooding and waste.
5. Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councillor Annual Report. Cllr Mellen presented the report which included the new recycling regime and details of a skills and innovation centre in Stowmarket to address the skills gap in the district. A copy of the full report is available on Westhorpe Parish Council's website.
6. Westhorpe Trust Report. The report was presented by Cllr Christian, Chairman of the Trust who noted that over £9,200 had been distributed to Westhorpe residents over the past year. Residents may request assistance from the Trust in confidence by contacting the Chairman or any of the Trustees. A copy of the report is available on Westhorpe Parish Council's website.
7. Village Hall Committee Report. The Chairman read out the report in the absence of the Chair of the village hall noting that the use of the hall had been at about the same level as the previous year. As the hall cannot be maintained on current bookings, regular fund-raising events are required to boost income. A community survey is planned for distribution to Westhorpe and surrounding communities to find out more about the type of events the local community wants. A copy of the report is available on Westhorpe Parish Council's website.
8. St Margaret's Parish Church Report. Clive Mees presented the report in the absence of the Churchwarden noting two services continue to be provided each month, a wedding took place last summer, and the Act of Remembrance and Carol Service were well attended. The church organ has been repaired and two organists, both of whom are Westhorpe residents, now provide music for the services. Several repairs to the church have taken place over the past year and donations to the book table have continued. Thanks were given to the volunteers who ensure the church is open every day. A copy of the report is available on Westhorpe Parish Council's website.

So signed and approved at a meeting of 22 September 2026

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9. OPEN FORUM. No matters were raised for discussion.