

Parish Chairman's Report for AGM May Tuesday 19th 2026

First of all my thanks to Ginny who now has had a full year as our clerk, we much appreciate the support she gives to all of us and the efficient way she carries out the duties involved, the role of Parish Clerk keeps getting more complicated it seems we are governed by people who want to complicate everything, this also includes a bank who make what should be simple process to set up online banking a major task!

We have 4 full Parish Council meetings in the past year in September, January, March and last May.

A number of issues have been discussed, some residents have complained about speeding and as a result Andy Mellon was able to provide a traffic assessment which revealed relatively low numbers of vehicle movements but some cars exceeding the 30 mph limit, we could have the road with 30 mph signs but this is very expensive and to be honest I am not sure that delivery vans in particular will take much notice.

As a result of last year's AGM discussion and the concern about the number of houses this Government is expecting to be built in Westhorpe I wrote to Angela Raynor who at the time was the minister responsible, I copied our MP and did receive a reply from Baroness Taylor of Stevenage which frankly did not say a great deal in answer to our concerns.

Flooding has been a concern since Storm Babet back in October 2023, we have done what we can from our point of view cleaning the ditch running from the village to Westhorpe Hall and the pond beside the village green, the work will have helped but I fear nothing could prevent flooding in what was exceptional circumstances.

Our thanks to Richard Brown for keeping the SID operating although in times of low sunshine it reverts to kilometres per hour rather than miles per hour.

As a result of a phone call from Stuart Jefferies we were made aware that £2,407 of Community Infa Structure money was due to be received by Westhorpe as the property involved was inside the Westhorpe and not Wyverstone parish boundary which is welcome income.

We have reported damage to the 30 mph repeater signs but could only get one replaced but at least the damaged 30 mph sign on entry from Finningham is now replaced.

We have had planning applications for Westhorpe Hall to go back to a residential property, change of use for a farm building at Lodge Farm and attention to conifer trees at Thornglade. Also a renewal of planning at Church Farm with minor adjustments.

The Parish Council has spent a lot of time discussing the provision of a Neighbourhood Plan which we all agree would be beneficial but the withdrawal of central government support and the complexity of the process makes this very difficult, I viewed the Parish Plan for Badwell Ash and the amount of detail and length of the publication was frightening.

We have discussed the hot topic of moving the dog bin opposite the church and have done our best at informing residents regarding the changes to waste collections, personally I support maximising what we recycle but I am sure there will be difficulties. We identified six properties that had not received the blue bins but I am pleased to say all have now received them and those involved have been very appreciative.

We had our annual litter pick in April which made a difference we tend to try and keep on top of the volume of litter on a regular basis.

Our thanks to Andy Mellon who stood down as our Suffolk County Councillor for all his work, attendance to our meetings over that time, he continues as our District Councillor. We welcome (hopefully) our new County Councillor.

Thank you again to Ginny for organising the annual audit, we were pleased to welcome Martin Brown to replace Ian Cotgrove who stood down after many years of excellent service, may I finally thank all of the Parish Council for your time and commitment we maybe on the lowest step of democracy but it is important to look after the interests of the residents of Westhorpe which I know we do to the best of our ability.

David Barker May 20th 2026