

## **SOUTH WOOTTON PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held at 7.00pm on  
Friday 17th April 2026 at South Wootton Village Hall**

**PRESENT:** Mr S Scales (Chairman) Mr P Bland (Vice Chairman), Mr M Narborough, Mrs D Gotts, Mrs T Banks, Mr H Hofmeister, Mr A Porter, Mr D Goddard, Mrs T Carney, Mrs T Cornwell (Clerk), Mrs M Kirby (Assistant Clerk), Borough / County Councillor Mr Simon Ring and 15 Parishioners who signed the attendance list.

**APOLOGIES:** Mr R Williamson, Mrs M Albinson and Mr S Wells

**TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF 11<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2025:** These were proposed as a correct record by Mr Doughty, seconded by Mrs Doughty with all members and residents in favour, they were signed by Mr Scales (Chairman).

### **INTRODUCTIONS – CHAIRMAN AND COUNCILLORS:**

Mr Scales stood and welcomed all in attendance and the register was circulated around for signing by the Parishioners.

He stated that the evenings meeting would follow the usual format. First, our Parish Councillors will stand and introduce themselves individually.

He explained that the Parish Council meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month; he also explained that there are four separate sub-committees, Assets, Finance, Policy which meet every 3 months and the Planning Committee which currently deals with applications as and when they appear via email.

Mr Scales asked the Councillors to introduce themselves and to outline their roles on the Parish Council. He explained that the Chairman of each Committee would then report on the activities of the past year and will take questions at the end of their reports.

He said that Mrs Banks would also be providing a report from South Wootton in Bloom, Mrs Gotts would say a few words about the Wootton Park Committee, and he would provide a brief report about the South Wootton School Federation.

Mr Scales wished to thank all Parish Councillors and both Mrs Cornwell and Mrs Kirby for all the hard work that they do for the Parish.

During the introductions, Mr Porter mentioned that currently the Parish Council hold coffee mornings every quarter to get together informally and have a chat, in due course this will be opened up to offer possible new Councillors the opportunity to come along, meet everyone and ask any questions.

## **PRESENTATIONS FROM COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN:**

**ASSETS**: Mr Narborough stood as the Chairman of the Assets Committee and provided his report. He said that it had been a very busy year with many things being modernised and bought up to date.

**Allotments**: Mr Narborough stated that the Parish Council has 109 allotments, and all plots are currently rented out, there is a short waiting list, and anyone interested in becoming a tenant should contact the Parish Office, Plots are charged at £40.00 per annum.

A new larger Water Tank has been installed on Plot 11B, with plans to renew another Tank on Plot 28 in due course.

He added that new rear boundary fencing has also been erected, where the Allotments border properties at Burghley Road and Reffley Wood.

**Village Green and Open Spaces**: Mr Narborough said that the Green is looking very well, with replacement wooden posts installed along Common Lane, he added that all the dykes have also been cleared out.

A new bench has been installed on The Green, near to Common Lane and is well used, another bench has been purchased to replace a damaged bench, and this will be installed once the ground has dried out.

The Dredging of the Pond has taken place, and we are just waiting for the silt to dry out so that it can be spread out and seeded.

Three cuts of the season have already taken place, and the Green is looking great.

Finally, Mr Narborough explained that the potholes and damage to the humps along Common Lane have been scheduled in for repair and the work will be carried out in due course.

- Mr H spoke regarding the number of Muntjac Deer that roam the Parish and asked if there were any plans for the Parish Council to carry out a cull? He added that they cause great damage to gardens.

It was said that the Parish Council has no plans to carry out a cull of the Deer, although there is a cull taking place on the Sandringham Estate where the meat is then sold.

**Village Hall**: Mr Narborough stated that the Village Hall Car Park has been resurfaced, additional Heating to the Toilets is to be installed in May and a new Fireproof Door has been fitted, he added that the Village Hall is looking good.

Cemetery: Mr Narborough was pleased to report that renovations to the Churchyard wall are ongoing, and investigations are being made into the possible installation of a Pergola in the Cemetery which will provide a nice place for visitors to sit/shelter.

Street Lighting: Mr Narborough stated that the updating of the Street Lighting is an ongoing programme with works already completed in the Avon Road area and further upgrades scheduled in.

Bus Shelters: Finally, Mr Narborough reported that four new Bus Shelters have been installed at Low Road / Edward Benefer Way with work started to install a further Bus Shelter on Grimston Road.

- Dr D spoke regarding the junction at Church Lane / Nursery Lane and said that the corner at this location is very dangerous. He asked if anything could be done to improve visibility and safety such as the installation of Mirrors or whether the Zebra Crossing could have a hump installed to slow traffic.

Comment was made that Mirrors are not allowed on the Highway as they are deemed to be dangerous, however, it was said that enquiries could be made with the local Highways Engineer to see what may be possible at this location.

Borough / County Councillor Mr S Ring stated that he would also look into what may be possible at this location.

With his report complete, Mr Narborough asked if anyone had any questions.

With no other questions regarding Assets, Mr Scales thanked Mr Narborough for his report.

## **FINANCE:**

Mr Scales explained that he is the Chairman of the Finance Committee and said that the Committee consists of eight members and meets quarterly in April, July, October and January each year. Its function is to scrutinise the quarters' accounts and make recommendations to the full Parish Council.

The January meeting is attended by the full Council Membership and considers items for inclusion in the following year's budget. This is then agreed and the Parish Precept is determined.

Mr Scales explained that the last year was not as challenging as the previous two years. Energy costs were lower than expected but this was offset by one-off payments, for example a pond survey before the commencement of the dredging and other one-off unexpected maintenance/repair jobs.

Most areas of the expenditure remained in line with the budget set in January 2025. There were some notable exceptions, the Village Hall overspent due to a Boiler Service and overspend on Wages brought about by sickness cover and Wages paid to cover extra use.

Footway Lights were underspent due the Council being able to pay the maintenance element from CIL, Wootton Park was underspent, however, we are awaiting a bill for £4,500 for our contribution to the Park from North Wootton Parish Council. Lastly the Cemetery saw a £12,000 increase in fees in the last quarter which coincided with the Borough Council's announcement relating to the closure of Gayton Road Cemetery, this has now returned to normal levels.

Mr Scales said that the circulated summary sheet is a summary of this year's final accounts. This year again we have included CIL monies spent within the income column in each budget area, best illustrated by Bus Shelters and Footway Lights where we would of course not expect to see any income.

Again, this year's income from both the Village Hall and the Parish Meeting Room have outperformed budget expectations.

The precept for 2025/26 was set at £123,785 with our net expenditure being £101,442.31; an underspend of £22,342.69 - This is explained by the following:

Invoice awaited from North Wootton Parish Council  
Footway Lighting - CIL being used for maintenance costs  
Increased Cemetery Fees

This has allowed us to reduce the Precept for the second year running from £70.22 2025/26 to £69.12 2026/27 on a "Band D" property.

Mr Scales went on to speak about CIL money and explained that this is money levied by the Borough Council on new properties built within the Borough, the Parish Council receives 25% of that levy on properties built in our Parish because we have an adopted Neighbourhood Plan, without this we would only receive £15%.

It was explained that this year the Parish Council spent £198,579.16 on various CIL projects, including:

Adding more Bus Shelters within the Parish  
The Pond Dredging Work  
Repairs made to the dips in the Village Hall Car Park  
And supporting the wider Community with a Climbing Wall at the Junior School and new shutters at the Pavilion at Wootton Park.  
We have also begun updating our Footway lighting, with the Avon Road area completed and work now starting on other areas in the Parish.

- Mrs D asked if the CIL funding will dry up at the end of the various Developments.

Mr Scales confirmed that it would and said that it is important that we carry out jobs such as upgrading the Street Lighting while this money is available.

Mrs Cornwell added that the Knights Hill Development will take approximately 10 years to build out, therefore CIL Funds will be received for some time yet, with payments being received in April and October each year.

Mr Goddard asked residents if they had any ideas for Projects within the Parish could they please put them forward to Mrs Cornwell in the Office, so they can be considered.

- Mr M asked about the new Lavender Fields Estate and enquired whether a Bus Stop / Service would run through there, he said that it is quite some distance to the nearest Bus Stops at Meadow Road and Spinney Close.

Mrs Cornwell stated that when the Wootton Grange Estate is complete, there will be a Bus Service which will travel through from Wootton Grange to the Lavender Fields Estate and beyond, she confirmed that the Developers are incorporating Bus Stops in both Development Sites.

Mr Goddard informed residents that it has been suggested by the Developers that the through road will be open in the summer of 2027.

There were no other questions regarding the Finances

### **PLANNING:**

Mr Bland stood as Chairman of the Planning Committee and explained that the Parish Council is a designated statutory consultee regarding planning matters and consequently, we receive for comment, planning applications relevant to the Parish from the Borough Council.

In the main, the Planning Committee view applications individually and emails its comments to the Parish Office, this runs successfully with the provision to meet in person if there are concerns among the Committee/Residents or if the application is large or complex.

There were 48 Planning Applications in total since April 2025 - 11 of which were Tree Preservation Order Applications, some of which we supported with various conditions - one application, for 20 Rushmead Close was objected to and was also subsequently refused by the Borough Council. Three applications were Reserved Matters applications.

Knights Hill: Mr Bland stated that we have had some problems on site, resulting in four breaches of planning.

Allison Homes: Members of the Parish Council have recently met with representatives from Allison Homes who are in the process of submitting an application to the Borough Council's Planning Department to vary the housing mix on Phase 3, from 4/5 Bed houses to 2/3 bed houses.

Mr Bland commented that locally the developers are struggling to sell the houses, and added that the outlay of money is huge getting the infrastructure in.

- Mrs Banks asked why, if the houses are not selling, is the Borough Council calling for sites.

Mr Bland explained that it is the Government who is asking for more houses to be built.

- Mr H asked about the parking issues at the Junior School / Hall Lane and said that he often observes dangerous driving and wanted to know what could be done about the situation.

Mr Bland informed residents that Allison Homes have committed to installing access to the rear of the Junior School with provision for six Car Parking spaces, however, this would not be open until the 75<sup>th</sup> property is occupied.

He added that Norfolk County Council will need to be asked to install a footpath to run from the access point, across the school field and to the school. It was said that the Junior School does not have funding available to do the necessary work.

Borough / County Councillor Mr Ring enquired how long the path would have to be and said that he would make enquiries and look into the matter.

Mr Narborough spoke regarding the parking situation at both South Wootton Schools and said that the problems are the same at North Wootton, he added that over the years many meetings have taken place regarding the issues and they still remain 30 years on, mainly due to 70% of the children attending the schools from outside of the catchment area.

Mr Scales stated that the Parish Council will investigate the situation regarding the installation of a path and suggested that this may be something that can be funded via Parish Council CIL funds.

- Mrs Banks asked about the path at Knights Hill and enquired when this would be installed.

Mrs Cornwell stated that again this would be installed after a certain number of properties have been occupied. (Mrs Cornwell has emailed the Developers for Confirmation).

With no other questions regarding Planning matters, Mr Scales thanked Mr Bland for his report.

**POLICY:** Mr Hofmeister stood as Chairman of the Policy Committee and explained that the Policy Committee meets either quarterly or when required.

South Wootton Parish Council has 'Quality Status', which means that the Council must ensure that it complies with all legislation relating to this level of local government.

In order to achieve this, we have policies and procedures, which are put together in great detail by Mrs Cornwell, and which are kept up to date and reviewed at regular intervals.

They take into account current legislation and guidelines and cover every aspect of Parish Council business, such as: Code of Conduct, Financial Regulations, Health and Safety, staff related matters and Record Management, to name just a few. At present we have a total of 38 policies.

To safeguard both staff and the public using its facilities, there are Risk Assessments in place for all areas of Parish Council responsibility, which include the Village Hall, the Cemetery, St Mary's Churchyard, the Green and Allotments - 16 Risk Assessments in total.

We also deal with staff matters. Every year staff appraisals are being conducted and possible changes to terms of employment and remuneration may be considered and recommended. We are also involved when it comes to co-opting new Parish Councillors.

The Committee also considers an Action Plan for the year, which normally covers items which are not part of maintenance, like those mentioned by the Assets Chairman.

With no questions regarding Policy, Mr Scales thanked Mr Hofmeister for his Report.

### **PRESENTATIONS FROM AFFILIATED COMMITTEES:**

**SOUTH WOOTTON SCHOOL FEDERATION:** Mr Scales explained that he is the Co-Chairperson for the South Wootton School Federation and has been in the role since 2024.

Both schools retain their independence managing their own budgets; on the structural side the Federation is led by an Executive Head, who resides at the Junior School with two heads of School at the Infant School.

Mr Scales stated that great strides have been made since joining the schools together, with regular communication.

Comment was made that with the declining birth rate there had been a struggle to fill the Reception Class spaces, however, a pickup has been seen since the new Developments have taken place at Lavender Fields and the Allison Homes site, meaning more children will live within walking distance of the schools.

All staff have retained their current contracts; however, all new staff have signed Federation contracts.

The staff at both Schools have been happy to work across both schools as and when required.

Attendance at both schools is good and academically the pupils are doing well, Year 6 will be taking their SATs week commencing 11th May.

Lots of extracurricular activities take place, including sports and music, with children also taking part in the Omni Games.

School Trips have also been organised, and children very much enjoy the Trim Trail and the Forest School, which enhance their education.

Mr Scales stated that the schools are very aware of the Parking issues, however, commented that cycles have been parked in the Bike Shed so some children are biking to school – he confirmed that the possibility of using CIL Funds to fund a path from the new rear entrance to the school will be investigated.

Finally, it was said that some work is being carried out in the school garden at the Junior School and some new planters have been installed.

Thanks were given to Mr Nolan Mills and Mrs Karin Price for their help with this.

Mr Scales asked if there were any questions.

There were no other questions regarding the School Federation.

**WOOTTON PARK:** Mrs Gotts explained that Mr Border, the Chairman of the Wootton Park Committee had kindly produced an End of Year Report which she read out:

The start of last year saw some large projects on the park, from upgrading the Pavilion facilities to putting in some new gym equipment. All of which has proved to be a great asset. However, the last few months have taken on a slightly slower pace.

We have installed two new benches in the park this year, one on the west side of the park, that is a memorial bench to Alan Blake, a lifetime resident of North Wootton. The other is near the infants play area next to the tree carvings. This is a continuation of our project to place benches all around the park so the less mobile in our community are able to walk around the park and rest as required.



The Football Club is going from strength to strength and are now very active in all age groups from mini kickers up to the adult team. The club has done some improvement work in the park including the quality of the football pitches, even securing 60 tons of topsoil and filling in the sunken drain and reseeding the area.

The wildflower strips on the North and South Wootton Gaps have been reinstated for this summer. The position of one has been slightly moved because the show of flowers was stunted due to a little too much shadowing from the trees nearby.

Windfall trees in the park over the year have been few and all minor ones. We have had one in the pond and another in North Wootton Gap near the Pyramid.

The ditch has been running very well over the year, and this has been noted that even with the wetter weather the park dries out quicker than it used to.

Picnic on the Park did go ahead last year, even after it was cancelled due to bad weather, we rescheduled it for 3 weekends later only to have similar weather! Once the heavens opened at 3pm that was the end of that!

In conclusion I think we have had a successful year on the park to ensure that the park is a great amenity for the whole of the Woottons community to cherish and enjoy.

Thanks were given to everyone on the committee for their continued support and encouragement.

Mrs Gotts stated that she had circulated some fliers about the "200 Club" in case anyone would like to join, she explained that the cost to join is £24 per annum paid by Standing Order. More than half of the "200 Club" monies are paid back to Prize Winners, – there are five prizes per month to be won.

Winners are notified by letter, and anyone wishing to join the "200 Club" can do so by contacting Tracey at the Parish Office.

Finally, Mrs Gotts informed members that on weekends, when Football Matches are being played, the Pavillion is open serving teas, coffees and cake, she added that members of the Public can pop along and have a seat inside or outside and support the Club.

With no questions regarding Wootton Park, Mr Scales thanked Mrs Gotts for her report.

**SOUTH WOOTTON IN BLOOM:** Mrs Banks stated that she is the Secretary of South Wootton in Bloom and Mrs Patel is the Chairperson, with Mrs Albinson as the Deputy Chair, she added that they are an Independent Committee made up of a team of eight volunteers and regular visitors who are responsible for planting the various displays of flowers in the Village. She added that SWiB has been running for 20 years with most of its members still there from the start.

Mrs Banks said that the current members are all aging and said that SWiB is always grateful of extra helpers and would love some younger people to join and help out, if anyone is interested in volunteering, or has any ideas or knowledge could they get in touch as they would be welcome to join.

Mrs Banks stated that residents can see the results of their efforts all around the Parish and thanks must be given to Mr and Mrs Mills for much of the planning, planting and tidying.

Mrs Banks explained that SWiB is currently in the process of seeking authorisation from Norfolk County Council, with the help of the Parish Council and County Councillor Mr Ring to plant spring bulbs on the new Knights Hill Roundabout. With the help of grants, it is hoped that something will be done there next year.

SWiB have entered the Norfolk Churchyard competition, and they hope to be successful in this, we have had the enthusiastic support of the new Revd. Peter Farquhar and thanks again must go to Mrs Karin Price for all her hard work in keeping this area beautiful with help at times from other SWiB Members , especially, Mr and Mrs Mills.

SWiB will also be entering the Anglia in Bloom competition, digitally once more, the entry will be for Wootton Park only, however, we have previously entered the Churchyard and The Green in the past. This year the Churchyard is in another competition, and The Green is affected by the Pond Dredging at present.

It is hoped that SWiB may re-enter the full Anglia in Bloom competition in the future, when construction has settled, however, unfortunately the Village has the appearance in many areas of being a giant building site.

Mrs Banks reported that SWiB will be sowing Wildflowers in Wootton Park again, financed by the Wootton Park Committee, she added that Mr and Mrs Border has organised the lifting of over 1,000 snowdrops from the site of the new Telecoms Mast and replanted them around trees in the South Wootton strip, the work was carried out with help of a working party consisting of SWiB volunteers.

It was explained that SWiB have also recently purchased 13 Bat, Robin, Butterfly and Bird Boxes with a generous Borough Councillor grant from Borough Cllr Mr Coates, these will be placed around the Parish, seven other birdboxes, purchased by the Parish Council, were placed in the Cemetery and the Churchyard Garden.

Mrs Banks wished to give her thanks to the Parish Council for their generous £500.00 Grant to SWiB, she said that without this money, they would not be able to function.

Finally, it was said that the Committee meet in the Parish Office Meeting Room on the third Tuesday of the month, and anyone interested in going along would be very welcome.

With no questions, Mr Scales thanked Mrs Banks for her report.

### **CONCLUSION**

Mr Scales thanked members for giving their reports and asked if there were any other questions.

- Mr T enquired about the new Knights Hill roundabout and asked if lighting would be installed.

Mrs Cornwell stated that as far as she understood, no Street Lighting has been planned, however, this is something that comes under the remit of Norfolk County Council.

With no further questions, Mr Scales thanked everyone present for attending and closed the meeting at 8.00pm.