

Wickham Market Partnership

ANNUAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS

Year ended 5th April 2025

Charity Registration No. 1096332
Company Registration No. 4555122

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 5th April 2025

The Trustees, who are also Directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act, submit their annual report and the audited financial statements for the year ended 5th April 2025. The Trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" issued in October 2006 in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity.

The charity is a company limited by guarantee and was set up on 7th October 2002. It is governed by a Memorandum and Articles of Association, which were last amended on 7th October 2002. The company achieved charitable status on 4th March 2003.

The Trustees of the charity are:

Mrs C Caudwell
Mr G Hering
Ms J Hopps
Mr R Jenkinson
Mr R Lewis
Mr C Owens

The trustees are appointed for a three-year term and a third retire by rotation at the Annual General Meeting and may be reappointed. Additional trustees can be appointed by ordinary resolution.

Company Secretary is Mrs C J Caudwell and the registered office of the company is:

Wickham Market Resource Centre,
Chapel Lane,
Wickham Market,
Woodbridge,
IP13 0SB

Bankers for the charity are:

The Co-operative Bank plc, P.O. Box 101, 1 Balloon Street, Manchester M60 4EP

Solicitors for the charity are:

Greenland Houchen Pomeroy, 38 Prince of Wales Road, Norwich, NR1 1HZ

Independent Examiner for the charity is:

Mr N Bestow, CGMA

The Wickham Market Partnership's Vision for Wickham Market is:

To be a community that values and supports all of its people

That serves the surrounding villages with pride

That works hard to sustain and improve its remarkable quality of life

Objects

Its objects are to secure and improve the economic and social framework of Wickham Market and the surrounding parishes by encouraging the development of recreational and leisure activities, offering opportunities for education and training and improving and enhancing the town and surrounding communities.

People

Trustees have met on a regular basis to make decisions on the work of the charity. Their voluntary commitment has been substantial.

Mrs Karen Burrows is the charity's part-time Administrative Assistant. The charity has no relationships with either related parties or any other charities or organisations.

Funding

The Partnership developed out of the Market Towns Initiative (MTI), a government scheme aimed at promoting the key role of market towns in rural communities and managed by the East of England Development Agency (EEDA). This funding finished in March 2004. The Partnership continues to attract grant funding to support the development of local initiatives, including the Peoples Millions Lottery Fund, Local Authority grants, Sizewell C Community Fund, Co-op Community Cares Fund, local charities and local businesses.

The Community Rooms are the base for the Partnership with regular lettings contributing to the running of them and enabling the charity to continue to employ an Administrative Assistant to manage its day-to-day business. Membership of the Partnership demonstrates the wide range of local and statutory organisations, businesses and individuals actively supporting the work of the charity. Subscriptions provide revenue funding for the Partnership managed website.



The Resource Centre

Community Rooms

The Resource Centre accommodates the Library, Community Rooms and Archive Centre and is a local focal point for residents and visitors. The Partnership leases the Community Rooms from Suffolk County Council with Suffolk Libraries IPS managing the building on their behalf up to June 2025, whereupon it reverts back to Suffolk County Council. A joint Management Committee deals with issues of maintenance and statutory obligations.

The Treatment Room and an associated office continue to be hired by a private chiropractor. The meeting rooms are normally used to provide Retinal Screening Clinics for patients with diabetes, the Citizens Advice Bureau, counsellors and therapists as well as offering a venue for meetings for local organisations.

Library

On June 1st, 2025, the provision of library services was moved from Suffolk Libraries IPS back under the control Suffolk County Council. The transition was largely seamless as all front-line staff, volunteers, friend's groups all transferred across at the same time. We wait to see how things develop over the coming months under the new regime but at the moment it is business as usual.

The Partnership continues to support and work closely with the library management team headed by Maggie Lusher. The library continues to be a key benefit for Wickham Market and the surrounding villages. The library is open 5 days a week and relies significantly on volunteers to complement the library staff so that the library can be fully open each day. Other services such as IT support and Genealogy sessions are also provided by volunteers on an ad hoc basis.

The Friends group in conjunction with Library Management team are currently developing plans to build a garden room extension at the rear of the library to extend the library capacity and have a pleasant outlook onto the garden. It is expected that it will be mostly funded through CIL.

The small group of volunteers who look after the Library/Resource Centre garden led by Barbara Harrington continue to do a fantastic job maintaining the borders, bushes, roses, etc. We are very grateful to them.

Wickham Market Area Archive Centre successfully moved into its new premises in the rear garden of the Resource Centre in 2023. A new lease was negotiated by the Partnership with Suffolk County Council for the Archive Centre to occupy a large, insulated log cabin unit. The unit was purchased by the Partnership with the help of grants from East Suffolk Council, Wickham Market Parish Council, Wickham Market Partnership and local charitable trusts together with a legacy from a former trustee and was built by a group of volunteers, including the Chair of the Archive Centre, Partnership trustees and Shed members.



A very successful Facebook page is bringing a range of photographs of the local area and people to a wide audience, thanks to the efforts of members, and together with the new premises is revitalising the work of the Centre and engendering interest in local history.

WMAAC was relaunched in May of 2024 with an Open Day when the premises were officially named the Morris Dyke Centre and exhibition materials were on display in the garden.

New signage has been installed on the front of the Resource Centre and a good working relationship is developing between the Partnership, the Archive Centre members and the Library service to bring history to the community in a more accessible way.

Website

Our website www.visitwickhammarket.co.uk whilst consistently achieving a monthly visitor total of 1000 plus is becoming out of date and a new up to date site was found to be necessary. To coincide with this, the Parish Council also stated their need for a new website to promote local business and tourism.

This was seen to be duplication of effort and as the Council had already managed to get funding for their website from East Suffolk Council it was agreed they would be the one to take the project forward with our help in the transition.

This would free the partnership from continuous funding of hosting and management costs for which the original funding had run out. It would also mean that Partnership membership payments would no longer be required as they were also used to support the running costs of the website.

Currently the transition is taking much longer than projected as we are waiting for the Parish Council and its web developers to produce designs for its new website. This is rather frustrating as we are continuing to fund our site whilst we wait. Ultimately it may mean that the village is temporarily left without a website to promote tourism and support local business, which would be a shame.

Wickham Market Shed

Since its initial meeting in January 2020 to gauge interest in developing a Men's Shed (and despite the delays caused by the pandemic) the project now operates every week for members to 'Connect, Converse and Create'. It is affiliated to the UK Men's Shed Association



With the move of the Archive Centre to its new premises they have been able to take on the two portacabins and a wooden shed behind the Village Hall and Football Club and have developed a functioning workshop. This is with the agreement of the Parish Council and marks a significant step forward for the project.

Following a successful grant application to the Co-op Community Cares Fund (managed by Suffolk Community Foundation) by the Partnership, which is facilitating this project, the workshop has been fully rewired and new flooring laid and most of the donated equipment has now been rationalised. A dust extraction system is also to be installed as well as battery-powered tools to be purchased so that repairs and outdoor projects can be carried out. Community benches have been refurbished, birdboxes made and a range of other projects tackled. Sheddies are now looking forward to getting creative.



Tennis

Following the installation of three hard tennis courts, funded by the Peoples Millions of the National Lottery in 2008, tennis activities continue to be managed by a Tennis Club, including sessions with a dedicated coach. The maintenance of the courts remains the responsibility of the Partnership. The courts are cleaned regularly, but are reaching the end of their life without major refurbishment. Options to refurbish were costed and we applied to the Sizewell C Community Fund for a grant to complete the work. The decision on whether this application is successful or not is due in early May 25 (Afternote – Bid successful). The location of where to book Pay and Play sessions changed from a local business outlet, R & S Hardware to the Library in the Resource Centre. This year the

local primary school year group 6 used the courts once a week for half of the spring term. It is hoped that the usage of the courts by the school will increase next year.

Inspirations

Trading of this Community Interest Company (CIC) ceased in April 2024, with creditors and shareholders reimbursed. Shareholders were thanked for their contributions and for enabling the project to be realised. Residual funds have been transferred to the Partnership as part of the exit strategy of Inspirations, in line with its constitution and status as a CIC. These are now being used for other local projects. An application to Strike-Off the company has been made, which should be finalised shortly.

The George

Over the last year all of the major design issues have been resolved and the construction and renovation phase is now close to its end. There is a final list of construction activities which is expected to be complete in the next few weeks after which Building Control approval will be sought which will allow public use of the building. Initially this will be for drinks only as the Society will need to install the kitchen and complete a number of fit out requirements which will take about 3 weeks, following which the full restaurant service will be in place



In preparation for opening, staff recruitment has begun with the Pub Manager and Chef in place. Recruitment will continue with 2 further full time staff and about 12 part time staff to be trained ready for opening.

Liaison with local organisations and groups has been ongoing and a programme of wellbeing-focused activities in the Activity Room is in advanced development.

A new website <https://www.thegeorgecommunitypub.co.uk/> has been developed and now active.

Now that the project to rebuild and restore the George which began in 2016 is nearing completion The Society has enjoyed and appreciated the active and financial support the WMP has given throughout.

Future Plans

The Partnership is a key player in many village developments, with trustees being represented on other major committees. These include the Parish Council and the George Public House as well as facilitating projects such as the Shed, assisting the Archive Centre move and the management of the Tennis Courts.

The Partnership has pledged £5,000 to the Village Hall Rebuild Fund (later changed to the Refurbishment Fund); important for matched funding applications.