



Wickham Chamber of Trade

MINUTES of the meeting held on Wednesday 22nd July 2026 at 5.30pm

Attendees:

CHAIR - Frank (FD) - The Square Cow
SECRETARY - Louise (LH) – Hygge Home
TREASURER - Sandy (ST) – Sue Ryder
Adrian - Hemings Home Hardware
John - Byrne & Co Estate Agents
Jonathan - Wickham Dental Practice
Josie - Josie's
Keith - Red Frog Trading
Lorraine - A Good Yarn
Luke - Josie's
Nigel - Police Liaison
Pam - South Downs Funeral Service
Sarah - Sarah Guild Floral Design
Trish - The Square Cow

Apologies:

Eliza – Warwick Lane / Baytree Walk
George - Bay Tree Gifts
Helen (HF) - The Square Yard
Jenny - Creative Sparks Studio
Julie - Wickham Fisheries
Laura - Salt & Paper Digital
Lorraine - Stream Salon
Nicki - Rowans Charity Shop
Rachel - Flowers by Rachel
Steve - Wickham Coffeehouse / Wickham & Knowle Parish Council

1. Welcome and New Members

LH officially welcomed newest members, Josie's, Rowans Charity Shop, The Yoga Shed, Flowers by Rachel, Wickham Dental Practice and King & Power Commercial Insurance Brokers to the Wickham Chamber of Trade.

2. WCT Update/s

Financial update

ST confirmed that WCT currently has funds of £3043.22. In addition WCT holds £160 as petty cash.

There is 1 membership fee outstanding.
There are currently no outstanding debts.

Membership

Chamber membership now stands at 28.

LH to speak again to One Stop re membership as they appeared quite interested in joining and being a part of the CCTV/crime group..
ST spoke to Co-Op. It was noted that Southern Co-Op were currently going through a potential takeover and may not be able to confirm anything for another couple of months.

3. Progress Updates

Wickham map

The new WCT pocket size map has been printed and has arrived. The map includes all current WCT members as well as information on parking and the major annual events. It is recognised that this paper version will probably need updating at regular intervals.

Copies have already been placed in the telephone box which is now acting as an 'Information' point.

Please could any members that have a counter, bar or other location on which they could display the maps for visitors to the village please take a quantity and help us 'get them out there' asap.

WCT has purchased a few holders for the maps so, if you require one of these, please let us know.

The Parish Council have indicated that they should be able to provide funding towards producing a similar version of the map for display on the large board located by the bus stop. LH is liaising with the Parish Council who are in turn liaising with WCC to firm up an action plan so as to avoid any duplication.

Wickham Festival

FD recognised, once again, how appreciative we are of the Parish Council funding the Festival Bus again this year, as well as the tickets for residents on the Sunday.

The Treasure Trail that will take visitors around Wickham village, encouraging them to visit all WCT members' businesses, has been planned and trail sheets are arriving this week. LH will organise distribution of trail sheets, trail answers (for members in case they get asked for help), posters and the vinyl records that members will need to display for the duration, either in their shop/business or in their window, depending on whether you would like to encourage people to come in to your premises rather than just looking at the outside.

Trail sheets will be available at bus stops (The Square and, hopefully, the Festival end), and we will distribute some to members too. Participants are also encouraged to pick up a copy of the Wickham map to assist them on the trail.

Completed trail sheets will be handed in at the desk upstairs in Warwick Lane. Children will receive a sweet treat as a little prize.

Sue Ryder has kindly donated a Pimms Hamper that is being filled with goodies from members to award as the main prize for the adult trail. The winner will be drawn at midday on the Sunday.

HF has been busy organising a schedule of buskers and performers here in the village and will liaise with TD to ensure no clash of timings etc.

4. Adapting to a changing marketplace

It was widely agreed that the commercial landscape in The Square has changed over recent months.

It was recognised that parking in The Square has become increasingly difficult. The WCT reiterates their stance that workers should, wherever possible, avoid parking in the main public car parks. The Wickham maps include information on the other car parking options around the village.

Following the last meeting, the Parish Council have been working on solutions and better signage has been proposed to direct traffic to alternative car parks from The Square and from locations such as the Shell roundabout.

We are delighted that Josie's is bringing plenty of new visitors to the village and there was much discussion around how to capitalise on the increased visitor traffic and convert these visitors into paying customers for other businesses in Wickham.

Businesses elsewhere in The Square, such as in Warwick Lane and Bay Tree Walk, reported a huge decline in footfall and there was discussion around whether increased visitors and a drop in footfall could both occur concurrently. It was acknowledged that both could be true.

Josie explained that, when they opened in Bishops Waltham, other businesses reported a 'return to normal' following the initial excitement/influx surrounding their opening. It was, however, recognised that similar businesses would need to adapt/ensure their offering was unique/of an equal quality if they were to see customers return.

It was agreed that the drop in footfall was perhaps partially due to regular customers not coming to the village on the assumption that they would not be able to find parking (public social media posts have, without doubt, been extremely damaging) and new visitors not being familiar with what else the village has to offer, particularly that the shopping walks exist.

The village maps can help with this if all businesses can display and promote them. Josie's agreed to have maps in a stand on their counter (or other suitable location) particularly so customers waiting for tables can browse what else there is on offer in Wickham. Byrne & Co have offered to display a copy of the map in their window. The Square Cow, Warwick Market, A Good Yarn have all agreed to display maps on their bars/counters. As above, maps will also be displayed in the phone box (Information Point) and on other counters/bars around the village. The map also has a QR code on it which takes people directly to the directory page on the WCT website which lists every single local shop and business (members and non members).

The point was raised that new visitors to the village were of a different demographic and new ways of marketing to a younger audience should be considered. Social media is one example. A younger audience may use Instagram and TikTok whereas in the past our customers may have looked to printed publications and/or Facebook. LH can look in to identifying training on these social media streams if members feel it would be useful.

5. Lone Working in Retail

Unfortunately, our presentation wasn't able to take place at this meeting so will be rescheduled for a future meeting.

6. Any Other Business

WCT Marquee

No suitable location has been identified for the WCT marquee.

LH will liaise with the Parish Council to investigate whether they wish to keep it and find suitable dry storage or whether it can be sold off.

Picnic on the Green

Knowle Village are hosting a Picnic on the Green on 23rd August and are looking for raffle prizes for the raffle which is in aid of Hounds for Heroes.

LH will send details in the Members WhatsApp group.

7. Date of next meeting

The next WCT meeting will take place on **Wednesday 30th September 2026 at 5.30pm at Josie's.**