

A close shave for Wicklewood village

Wicklewood village is facing the threat of tidal waves of new housing required to meet targets imposed by the government in Westminster. The first wave proposed by local planners last year aimed to add 52 new houses to the existing stock of just 407 households in the village. Following objections from Wicklewood Parish Council and individual villagers, an independent planning inspector recommended in March this year removing 40 of the new houses from the plans.

However, this good news is only a temporary reprieve. In February, South Norfolk planners launched a call for yet more building land to meet a further 53% increase on the current targets across the county. While Wicklewood parish council recognises the need for more and affordable housing, it is not clear how already stretched essential services will be able to support the dramatic increases in households required by central government.

For example, there is already not enough capacity to handle local sewage. There are numerous discharges from our local pumping station and nasty smells are frequently reported from this site. It has been listed as one of Anglian Water's worst stations every year since 2021 when data collection started. The sewage holding tank has not been increased since it was originally built in the 1980s, even though many new properties have been added since then and the village of Morley now feeds into it as well.

Anglian Water have confirmed that between 2021-2024, sewage was discharged in or near Wicklewood 165 times for a total of 1922.7 hours. In 2024 alone, sewage was discharged 38 times for a total of 425 hours.



And it is not just sewage. School places, storm water drainage, doctors, dentists are just some of the other essential services straining to meet demand. Expectations that vital infrastructure will follow development are not realistic.

But, as residents, there is a way to influence future planning decisions, by agreeing a [neighbourhood plan](https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/planning/future-development/local-plans/neighbourhood-plans) (<https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/planning/future-development/local-plans/neighbourhood-plans>) in advance with the planners.

Neighbourhood Plans enable communities to have a say about the development and growth of their local area. An agreed Neighbourhood Plan must be taken into account when assessing planning applications for new development in that area. If Wicklewood has an agreed neighbourhood plan, it could be used to tell the planners what the villagers want before important decisions are taken. Wicklewood was fortunate to avoid having a large development of 40 new houses forced on the village this year. We may not be so fortunate next time.

There are several stages in the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan:

1. Form a steering group
2. Define the Neighbourhood Area (the area you want your plan to cover)
3. Engage the community and gather evidence on the key issues to be addressed within the plan
4. Prepare and consult on a draft Neighbourhood Plan
5. Submit the Neighbourhood Plan to local authority
6. Independent examination of the Neighbourhood Plan
7. Community referendum on the Neighbourhood Plan
8. Making (adoption) of the Neighbourhood Plan by local authority

Do you think that a Wicklewood neighbourhood plan would be worthwhile? Would you like to have your say in it? Would you like to join a group to help develop it?

Answer a very short survey (only three questions) about a Wicklewood neighbourhood plan if you think the village needs one.

Come to one of the meetings at the Wicklewood village hall to find out more and tell us what you think. The meetings will be held on:

Thursday 18 June 11.00am

Sunday 14 June 3.00pm

Monday 29 June 7.00pm

The survey is available online at https://www.allcounted.com/s?did=3oabz96puomoa&lang=en_GB and a paper copy is available at The Cherry Tree pub