

**Minutes of the 1279th Meeting of the Manchester
Pickwick Club held at the Moorside Social Club on
17th February 2026**

Present: Ben Allen, Dodson, Job Trotter, Captain Boldwig, Jem Wardle, Tom Roker (aka Pickwick)

Apologies: Jingle, Fogg, Dr Slammer, Mivins, Solomon Pell, Rev Stiggins

Dodson insisted on paying for a round of drinks “on the club”, but followed this up with a demand for our £5 for the evening. Once a sharp lawyer.....

The meeting opened at 8.00 on the dot. Mr Pickwick claimed credit for this, and banged the gavel several times. Job Trotter was definitely paying attention, and kept up with his gavel duties admirably.

As Mivins was absent the minute writing duties fell once again on Mr Pickwick. He was keen to point out that he could not be responsible for any inaccuracies, especially those concerning Dodson.

Mivins is still unwell. Dodson, who visits daily, kept us up to date with his condition, and said some days were better than others. He has had several falls over the last couple of weeks. He is still visited by Beverley from the U3A, and has carers 4 times a day. He remains cheerful. There were several occasions when Dodson referred to Mivins as “Brian”. When this was pointed out his reply was that as we only know his surname, it was possible his first name could have been Brian. What a cunning legal rogue he is. A “thinking of you” card was signed by all, and a copy of the minutes of the last meeting was sent with it for approval (or otherwise) from our distinguished minute writing guru.

Jingle was absent because he has a viral infection, and didn’t want to pass this on. Fogg missing because he had a night photography project to complete for the following day, and he has been unable to do this over the last 2 weeks owing to the very poor weather. He accepts a fine is inevitable.

Solomon Pell has now had eye operation. Jingle was to contact him to see if he is able to return soon. We will get an update at the next meeting from Jingle

The minutes of the previous meeting were read by Mr Pickwick. The minutes were agreed by Ben Allen, and seconded by Captain Boldwig. An electronic copy is now to be sent to Jem Wardle to upload to the new website. Dodson said that the minutes were “not bad for a first attempt”, on being told that this was a second go, he was less complimentary.

Job Trotter managed 3 fines within 10 seconds, one for “Bill” and 2 for swearing when caught out.

Matters arising. We will now meet on the 3rd Tuesday of the month. It is by far and away the quietest evening of the week. Jem Wardle asked for any old photos, menus, notebooks etc that may be of interest, with a view of including these on the website, Dodson said he has many, but the majority of them are of people who are no longer with us. The consensus of the meeting was that including these would help create an easily accessible archive for others to view. Dodson described Jingle senior, who it seems was certainly a live wire. We can see where Jingle junior gets it from.

It was agreed that as we are in 2026 we would increase the count to 120 for the toast to Mr Pickwick.

Jem Wardle noted that the old website had now vanished, and that a search on Bing and Yahoo brought up the new website. This is still not the case on Chrome or Google. He noted that as the temporary contact he had received our first email. It turned out to be spam!!

A reminder that the new website is now live. It's to be found at **manchesterpickwickclub.uk**

Some discussion re the composition of the group following the AGM in April. Dodson pointed out that not being there usually brought consequences that were not always welcome. A veiled threat if ever I heard one. The consensus of the meeting was that Dodson is indeed a scoundrel. Having said that I'll make sure I'm there. It was agreed that Mr Pickwick would send a WhatsApp to the group asking them to think about recruitment (people we know who might be suitable, and enjoy it), the possibility of changing meetings from winter to summer and any thoughts re variety of venues and activities.

Dodson has removed Daniel Grummer as a signatory to the account. At the moment the remaining signatories are Dodson and Mivins. This is likely to change after the AGM.

The meeting went into rule 8 to allow Ben Allen time to go to the Chinese chippy for some curry and chips. He returned with 2 very generous portions of chips, 2 pots of curry and 5 barmcakes. Very nice too.

Ben Allen pointed out that so far the fines box only contained fines from Job Trotter and suggested the meeting add to it. Under pressure Pickwick went first, and then the meeting duly followed.

The end of rule 8 found Job Trotter at the bar clearing up. A very sneaky Jem Wardle encouraged Mr Pickwick to open the meeting with his gavel. Job, missed this opening on 3 occasions. He really must do better.

The site is a vast improvement on the 20 year-old previous one. Jem was congratulated on it, and asked for any photos that members may have that would increase the sites interest. Jingle and Dodson say they will bring them to the next meeting

The reading and inquisition was done by Jem Wardle. It was a passage from chapter 19 of the Pickwick Papers (he translated XIX for those who didn't do Latin at school). It was the scene involving Captain Boldwig meeting a rather drunken Pickwick.

Ben Allen was hopeful that it must be better than last month's feeble attempt. It wasn't though. Almost a carbon copy in fact. 5 members were fined for not knowing the answer. The remaining question for an absent Fogg was easy, and almost all of us knew the answer to Dodsons question (Hunt), with the exception of Dodson. An even more incredulous Jem Wardle said that it was the worst performance he had ever witnessed, beating last month's debacle, and he was right. No correct answers. Captain Boldwig didn't know the colour of his own cravat (although in fairness neither did any of the rest of us)

The toast to Charles Dickens was slow to start off, but we almost finished together. In agreement with the earlier point we did go to 120.

The toast to absent members was well sung given the circumstances that there were more members absent than present.

The “bent” (according to Ben Allen) raffle was drawn. Captain Boldwig (without his Black cravat) first out, followed by Wardle, Dodson, Pickwick, Trotter and Allen. It seems Ben’s assessment of the raffle was correct.

The vote of thanks was from Jem Wardle, who thanked the Chair, and to some extent the Vice Chair for keeping the meeting under a semblance of control, and thanked Job Trotter in particular for his substantial contributions to the fines box. His thanks produced another 3 fines from the Vice Chair. Ben Allen, as fines master thought this excellent. Jem thought that as Pickwick was doing such a sterling job, maybe he should perhaps stay on next year in the role.

Dodson, on the other hand declared firstly, that he hadn’t seen the result of the coin toss that left him with the task of coming up with a more critical interpretation of the Chair and Vice Chairs abilities. He then noted that Pickwick had not had much to control this evening, and added that he thought Ben Allen was attempting to become an “influencer”, in that it was he who was suggesting increasing fines, changing venues etc. He thought this a worrying trend. Dodson said that this had led to pandemonium in the meeting.

Good Neet Owd Friends was badly sung, whilst the National Anthem was an improvement on previous attempts. It seems that all of us now recognise that we have a King.

Fines amounted to £9.00, rising to £9.60, after another tirade from Job Trotter, (paid by Mr Pickwick as Job’s fines fund was spent)

In total £9.60

Raffle £3.00

Another good evening well spent.