

HACHESTON PARISH COUNCIL



Minutes of Annual General Meeting Friday 12th May 2023

1. Adrian Revill, as the retiring Chair called for nominations for his replacement. Cllr. Mee proposed Cllr. Markham as Chair. This was seconded by Cllr. Hurlock and carried unanimously. Cllr. Markham confirmed that she was pleased to stand as Chair and signed the Chair's Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

2. Cllr. Hurlock proposed Cllr. Leach as Vice Chair of the Parish Council. This was seconded by Cllr Mee and carried unanimously. Cllr. Leach confirmed that he was willing to stand as Vice Chair again and signed the Vice Chair's Declaration of Acceptance of Office. Duncan Armour introduced himself to the council and set how he was keen to work with the Council and some possible future projects. With two vacant seats, he was co-opted on to the Council. **ACTION** The clerk will inform ESC of the co-option and send introductory documents to the new Councillor.

3. Councillors all signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

4. There were no apologies for absence.

Present

Cllr. Nikki Markham (Chair)

Cllr. Stephen Leach (Vice Chair)

Cllr. Terry Mee

Cllr. Chris Hurlock

Absent Cllr Graeme Hall

In Attendance

Lydia Kirk (clerk) and 8 members of public.

5. There were no declarations of interest.

6. The minutes of the council meeting of 22nd March 2023 were approved as a true record of the meeting.

7. There were no matters arising.

PUBLIC FORUM

The Ward and County Councillors' Reports have been circulated and published on the village website

Councillor Armour raised various ideas on how the Parish Council can help its residents and also expressed concerns about other local problems that he thinks the Parish Council should address.

8. Appointment of Officers and Council Representatives

	Nominee	Proposer	Seconded
Responsible Financial Officer & Webmaster	L. Kirk	NM	CH
Examining Councillor	Cllr. Leach	NM	TM
Village Hall Parish Council Representative	Cllr. Hurlock	TM	NM
Footpath Officer	A. Revill	NM	DA
Village Recorder	R. Bowden-Smith	NM	TM
SALC Representative	Cllr. Armour	CH	SL

These proposals were all approved unanimously.

9. Report from the retiring Chair

Adrian Revill gave a verbal report on the Parish Council. Last year saw the start of some new initiatives for the Council and a change in emphasis in its work. The running of the council involved a considerable workload. In November it secured have secured the services of Lydia Kirk, an experienced and energetic clerk. She has steered the Council through two internal audits, an external audit and the updating of its procedures.

A new village website has been launched (www.hacheston.suffolk.cloud), a newsletter has recently been produced and the Parish Council is assembling a residents email list. The Council is trying to involve more people with its work and improve communications with residents.

He concluded by saying that he thinks that the future is bright for Hacheston. The effects of the pandemic are being shaken off. Thanks to developments in the village the council has funds to enrich the lives of the community and there is a different political balance in local government. After five years, he is now stepping down from the Council but sent his best wishes for its future.

10. Clerk's Report

Since the last meeting, a newsletter has been hand-delivered to each property in the village. The clerk reminded Councillors of the NALC recommendation to use separate email addresses for Parish Council business.

The Clerk thanked Adrian for all his help since she started working for the Council and remarked on how much he would be missed on the Parish Council.

11. Financial Officer's Report

a) The following payments were approved:

Reference	Amount	Payee	Details
P01 23-24	£275.00	Trevor Brown	Internal Audit
P02 23-24	£208.14	SALC	Annual Subscription
P03 23-24	£6.80	L. Kirk	10 x 2 nd class stamps
P04 23-24	£160.49	J. Coleman	Items for the Coronation event
P05 23-24	£10.49	L. Kirk	Refreshments for Annual Parish Meeting
P06 23-24	£70.00	G. Whiting	Grass cut on 6 th April

The donation to the Wickham Market First Responders will now be paid online, following an error with the account name on the cheque issued in March.

b) The following funds received since the last meeting were noted:

18/04/2023	£6,235.81	ESC	CIL Funds
28/04/23	£8,037.73	ESC	Precept

c) The bank balances as at 10.05.2023 were noted as being:

Community account	£33,195.49
Deposit account	£1,212.53

Cllr. Mee was concerned that the balance of the community account is too high and is not earning any interest. He will transfer excess funds to the deposit account online. He also expressed concerns that the clerk could do this under her 'view only' access. This led to some discussion on how the Council could use its financial assets most effectively to earn higher returns. Cllr. Markham advised that this should be raised for further consideration at a future meeting.

d) The bank statements and bank reconciliation are due to be reviewed by Cllr. Leach.

e) The Council now has access to online banking and two Councillors are able to dual-authorise payments. The Simple Servicing Authority to allow the Clerk administrative access was not received by Barclays and needs to be completed and submitted again. The standing order to the Village Hall has now been changed from monthly to six monthly as agreed at the last meeting.

12. The Internal Auditor's Report on the 2022-2023 annual paperwork was reviewed. The Council noted that donations to the Citizens Advice Bureau can be made under Section 143 and do not have to use Section 137. The Council is near its maximum fidelity insurance limit and the Clerk has contacted the insurance providers to see if an additional premium will be due if the cover level is increased to £40,000.

13. Procedural

- a) Cllr. Markham proposed accepting the **Accounts** for the year ending 31st March 2023. This was seconded by Cllr. Mee and carried unanimously.
- b) **Section One** (Annual Governance Statement) and **Section Two** (Accounting Statements) of the **Local Councils' Annual Return** were duly completed. The Chair read out each of the Annual Governance Statements. The Council could not confirm compliance with statement 4 as the Public Rights period did not cover the first two weeks of July as legally required. A written explanation of this will be provided to the External Auditor.
- c) The Council noted the requirement for an External Audit
- d) The statement of significant variances was considered and accepted.
- e) The clerk's scale point will remain the same until she has been in office for one year.
- f) Councillors re-confirmed their agreement to being summoned to meetings by email.
- g) Councillors completed their election expense forms and the clerk will return these to East Suffolk Council.

14. The following policies were reviewed:

- a) Standing Orders *A minor amendment to the tender limit as suggested by NALC was adopted.*
- b) Assets Register *There were no changes to this.*
- c) Financial Regulations *The latest version of NALC's model financial regulations were adopted with an amendment to footnote 11 regarding tender limits.*
- d) Statement of Internal Control *This policy was considered fit for purpose and the Council confirmed its compliance to the Statement.*
- e) Risk Assessment Physical Assets *This was amended to include the new Chair's details.*
- f) Financial Risk Assessment *There were no changes to this.*
- g) Data Protection Policy *This was last considered in January and did not require any additional changes.*
- h) Data Publication Scheme *There were no changes to this.*
- i) Save for the level of the fidelity insurance cover which is already being addressed, the policy was considered fit for the Council's needs.

15. Councillors agreed to re-adopt the Suffolk Code of Conduct.

16. Councillors agreed that Trevor Brown should be re-appointed as Council's Internal Auditor. The clerk wished for her thanks to Mr Brown for his very thorough audit and assistance throughout to be minuted.

17. The Community Infrastructure Levy Report for the period ending 31st March 2023 was approved and signed by the Chair and clerk.

18. **The Chair thanked everyone involved in organising the village Coronation event on Sunday 7th May.** It went very well and it was lovely to get the village together on the occasion.
19. **Correspondence received since the date of last meeting was considered.**
20. **Cllr. Mee reported that he had experienced difficulty accessing his online Register of Interests.** He had to get his unique Councillor number from East Suffolk Council in order to log in.
21. **There were no matters to be raised at the next meeting.**
22. **The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 7.30pm on Wednesday 26th July 2023.** There being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 7.48pm.

Signed: *N Markham*
N. Markham
Chair

26th July
Date