

Hacheston Parish Council

DRAFT Minutes of a Meeting of Hacheston Parish Council held at 7pm on Wednesday 18th March 2026

1. Present

Cllr. Leslie Judd Cllr. Terry Mee Cllr. Linda Montgomery Cllr. Alan Perry
Lydia Kindred (Clerk) Cllr. Hurlock was absent.

Apologies for absence

Cllr. James Hardy sent his apologies (work) and these were accepted.
In his absence, Cllr. Montgomery chaired the meeting as Vice Chair.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the meetings held on 21st January and 18th February were approved as true records

2. Matters arising

None

PUBLIC FORUM

No members of public were present
The County Councillor's report has been shared.

3. Chair's report

There was no official Chair's Report with the chair absent, but the Vice-Chair expressed frustration at the lack of engagement from residents with the Parish Council, noting that attendance at meetings tends to occur only when there is a significant planning application.

4. Clerk's report

The clerk reported the following:

- County Council elections will take place on 7th May, with a Government announcement on Suffolk's proposed unitary authority structure expected later this month.
- The clerk has completed the Enabling Communities Grant acceptance form and project monitoring form. The hedgehog equipment has been purchased, is in use and has been added to the Council's Asset Register.
- The Parish Council's precept request of £12,000 has been submitted and receipt confirmed by East Suffolk Council.
- The Section 137 expenditure limit for 2026–2027 has been confirmed at £11.60 per elector. Parish Council spending remains well within the permitted limit.
- Work has commenced on the year-end accounts and audit preparation, and a VAT reclaim will be submitted shortly.
- The clerk noted the SALC Annual Meeting Surgery held on 3rd March, which will be viewed via recording.
- The clerk attended the East Suffolk Council Town and Parish Council Planning Forum on 2nd February, where the proposed Developers' Charter was discussed, which should help to improve engagement between developers and local communities. Sites submitted through the recent Call for Sites process as part of ESC's Local Plan revision are expected to be published next week, but they are not seeking comments on the sites at this stage.

6. Financial matters

6.1) The following payments were approved:

Amount	Payee	Details
£31.99	L. Kindred	McAfee Total Protection (split between 3 Councils)
£78.00	East Suffolk Service Ltd	Annual dog bin service charge
£22.80	Suffolk Association of Local Councils	Payroll services
£301.12	HMRC	PAYE to 05.04.2026*
£1,194.93	L. Kindred	Pay to 31.03.26
£98.08	L. Kindred (Zooplus)	Reimburse hedgehog food

* To be paid in the next financial year, between 5th and 22nd April

6.2) The following receipts were noted:

07/01/26 £5,750 Suzuki sale proceeds
27/02/2026 £950 ESC Enabling Communities Grant

6.3) The following payments were noted:

02/02/26 £948.00 Plaztek Animal Housing Ltd (Approved hedgehog grant purchase)
02/02/26 £131.00 Omlet (Approved hedgehog grant purchase)

6.4) The bank balances & CCLA deposit funds as at 28.02.2026 were noted:

Community Account: £1,363.32
Deposit Account: £5,781.89
CCLA funds: £27,047.69

(including £89.41 income reinvestment in January)

6.5) The bank statements and bank reconciliation were reviewed, and signed by Cllr. Judd in the absence of the Examining Councillor.

6.6) To review year-to-date accounts & check in line with the budget

7. Assertion 10

Councillors noted the Website Accessibility Report, which scored 9.5/10, indicating a very high level of compliance. The clerk has been using resources from Breakthrough Communications, and it was noted that these are available for ongoing use without an annual charge. These resources may prove useful following the Internal Auditor's report, should further action be required in relation to Assertion 10 of the AGAR.

8. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Projects

The response from the Village Hall Committee regarding suggested CIL expenditure at the Village Hall and Fairfield Green was discussed. It was agreed to offer up to £5,000 of CIL funding towards a project that benefits the community, to be identified by the Village Hall Committee. The Parish Council will approve the final project to ensure compliance with CIL regulations and will then purchase any equipment.

9. Report from the latest Sizewell forum

Cllr. Montgomery shared some frustrations about how the forums are run and noted that a response to an email sent several weeks ago is still outstanding. She will forward the correspondence to the clerk who will raise the matter with another Sizewell representative who is normally very responsive.

10. Consider correspondence received:

Invitation to join Suffolk Parishes Road Safety Group– it was agreed to join this and members agreed that it sounded like a very worthwhile initiative.

ESC Clerk's CIL checklist- this was noted and it should assist completion of the annual CIL return.

East Suffolk Design Code Engagement Workshop 18th March– Invitation to Town and Parish Councils- noted but on the same evening as this meeting.

East Suffolk Planning Alliance (ESPA) newsletter, meeting notes and AGM at 2pm on Saturday 18th April- Cllr. Montgomery will try to attend the AGM

Invitation to Community Partnership Forum on 17th April – noted.

Request for the Council to raise awareness of or donate to *Lighthouse Women's Aid* charity– it was agreed to donate £100 to this project. Members noted their allocation for donations for the financial year had been fully committed but wished to support this charity and agreed that the funds can be used from general reserves using Section 137. It was agreed to discuss the policy for charitable donations further when considering the next budget.

A Thank you card from St Elizabeth Hospice for the Council's recent donation- noted.

11. Parish Councillors' reports on any actions

Cllr. Perry expressed frustration that the required pole upgrades for the Speed Indicator Devices have still not been completed, despite having been ordered a year ago and the clerk continuing to chase this. It was agreed to raise this as a formal complaint with Suffolk County Council.

Councillors discussed challenges faces by several local Councils in recruiting a full complement of Councillors. It was agreed that there could be some benefits in smaller Councils combining or sharing resources, such as clerks, which could also reduce costs. The clerk advised that this can only be done through a Community Governance Review conducted by East Suffolk Council and she will circulate further information on this to Councillors.

Cllr. Perry raised concerns about the poor condition of the village sign and it was agreed that purchasing a new village sign could be a positive community project funded through CIL.

12. Next meeting

This was confirmed as Wednesday 20th May 2026, which will be for both the Annual Parish Meeting and the Parish Council's Annual Meeting.

There being no further business, the Vice-Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.30pm.