

HACHESTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Annual Meeting of Hacheston Parish Council 7.30pm on Wednesday 20th May 2026

1. **Appoint a Chair**

In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair invited nominations for the position of Chair. Cllr. Hardy had previously confirmed his willingness to continue in the role, while noting that he is currently managing significant family and work commitments and would fully understand if another Councillor wished to stand. Cllr. Montgomery proposed that Cllr. Hardy be re-appointed, and this was seconded by Cllr. Mee. The proposal was carried unanimously.

The clerk will ensure that he signs the Declaration of Acceptance of Office as soon as possible.

2. **Appoint a Vice-Chair**

Cllr. Mee proposed that Cllr. Montgomery be re-appointed as Vice-Chair. This was seconded by Cllr. Hurlock and agreed unanimously.

Cllr. Montgomery confirmed her willingness to continue and duly signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office. In the absence of the Chair, she then chaired the meeting.

3. **Present**

Councillors: Cllr. Linda Montgomery Cllr. Chris Hurlock Cllr. Terry Mee

Lydia Kindred (clerk) 4 members of public

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs. Hardy and Perry.
Cllr. Judd was absent.

4. **Declarations of interest**

On advice from the clerk, Cllr. Hurlock declared an interest in the correspondence item regarding application DC/25/2997/FUL.

5. **Minutes**

The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 18th March 2026 were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Vice-Chair.

6. **There were no matters arising.**

7. **Appointment of Officers and Council Representatives**

Responsible Financial Officer & Webmaster	Lydia Kindred
Examining Councillor	Cllr. Hurlock
Village Hall Parish Council Trustee	Cllr. Perry
Hacheston United Charities Representative	Cllr. Hardy
Village Recorder	Rosemary Bowden-Smith*
SALC representative	Vacant
Sizewell Transport Forum Representative	Cllr. Montgomery
Community Partnerships representative	Vacant

* The Parish Council has not heard from the Village Recorder or received a report for the last two years. Cllr. Montgomery will aim to speak to her to see if she is still willing to continue this role.

PUBLIC FORUM

Brief comments were made about the Ancona solar panels application DC/25/2997/FUL, a letter sent to the Council about changes to the application and an upcoming meeting with the District Councillor. This will be discussed further at item 17.

A resident asked when the Speed Indicator Devices will be up again. The clerk advised that the required new poles for the solar-powered machines were installed last week so the SIDs can now go up, subject to the Chair's other commitments. The resident offered his assistance with this. The resident also explained more about other grant funding they are exploring, and reported that they have applied for ESC's Thriving Places grant. He has been advised by Sizewell C that Hacheston

is not included as one of the most affected parishes and therefore grant funding they can apply for is capped at a lower level. The clerk will look into this, and members noted the inconvenience that the Park and Ride- which is located in Hacheston- and the ongoing gas line diversion works are causing in the village.

8. Clerk's report

The clerk reported that the VAT claim covering the period 1 March 2025 to 28 February 2026 had been submitted and the refund was received in March. The clerk confirmed that the thicker poles required for the three solar powered Speed Indicator Devices were finally installed in May. The updated bank mandate was posted, and confirmation has been received that the changes will take effect within five working days of 20th April. The clerk has begun researching companies that supply village signs and will bring options to the July meeting for discussion on how the Council may wish to proceed with the project.

The Council's precept instalment was received at the end of April. East Suffolk Council has now published the Call for Sites submissions for the emerging Local Plan, and three sites have been put forward within Hacheston.

The clerk also attended a very informative Suffolk County Council Highways Budget Priority webinar on 12th May and will circulate the presentation once available.

The clerk confirmed that the transition to the new gov.uk email account has been completed and that she is monitoring both accounts during the changeover period. She does not have access to the gov.uk emails on her mobile phone, so urgent matters should be sent to the clerk's personal or Gmail account.

9. Responsible Financial Officer's report

a) The following payments were approved:

Amount	Payee	Details
£250.00	Trevor Brown	Internal Audit
£227.10	Suffolk Association of Local Councils	Annual Membership Subscription
£22.80	Suffolk Association of Local Councils	Payroll
£100.00	Gary Whiting	Grass cutting and strimming March
£100.00	Gary Whiting	Grass cutting and strimming April
£29.99	L. Kindred	Share of Microsoft subscription 2026-2027

b) The following payments and receipts since the last meeting were noted:

Payments:

05.04.2026 Village Hall £500.00 Donation (standing order)

Due to the Village Hall standing order being taken on the same day that the HMRC payment was scheduled, there were insufficient funds in the current account and the HMRC payment was rejected. As a result, HMRC may issue a fine or apply interest on the unpaid amount.

Councillors agreed that the payment will be resubmitted as a matter of urgency and that the current account should, where possible, be maintained at a balance of £1,000–£2,000 to prevent a similar issue occurring in future.

Receipts:

02.03.2026	Barclays	£13.56	Interest
29.04.2026	ESC	£6,000	Precept payment
25.03.2026	HMRC	£329.96	VAT refund

c) Bank balances as at 31st March

Community Account:	£667.48
Deposit Account:	£5,295.45
CCLA Account:	£27,213.25

d) Reserved funds

The total reserved funds as at 31st March 2026 was £21,835.43.

It was noted that CIL funds must be spent within 5 years of receipt or can be clawed back by East Suffolk Council.

e) Bank reconciliation

The Examining Councillor signed and dated the bank reconciliation and bank statements.

f) Bank mandate review

Cllrs. Hardy and Mee were noted as mandates on the Barclays account. Barclays has confirmed that Cllr. Hall has been removed and Cllr. Judd and Perry have been authorised but access still needs to be gained.

Cllr. Hardy and Mee were noted as mandates on the CCLA account.

g) Direct debit and standing order review

ICO £47.00 per annum

Hacheston Village Hall £1,000 per annum across two payments

10. Internal Auditors' Report on 2025-2026

This was reviewed and the recommendations were considered. The Council received one recommendation, to adopt a Data & IT policy to ensure compliance to Assertion 10. This will be addressed at item 13.

11. Procedural

a) Internal Controls

The Council's Statement of Internal Control was considered. The Statement was considered effective and fit for purpose.

b) Accounts

The Council's Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2026 were accepted as circulated.

c) AGAR Form

The Chair read through the Annual Governance Statements and Councillors agreed statements 1-9. Councillors could not agree to statement 10 as a Data Policy had not been adopted by 31st March 2026. The clerk will provide an explanation of this on the website and to the External Auditor. Section One and Section Two (Accounting Statements) of the Local Councils' Annual Return for year ending 31st March 2026 were duly completed. The annual paperwork will be published on the village website and sent to the External Auditor.

d) External Audit

It was agreed to opt out of an external audit as an exempt council and the Certificate of Exemption was duly completed and signed by the Chair and RFO.

e) Significant Variances

The statement of significant variances was noted and considered in order.

f) Clerk's pay

The clerk remains on the same scale point.

NJC pay awards for 2026-2027 will be announced later in the year.

12. Policy review

a) Standing Orders- No amendments required

b) Assets Register – It was agreed to remove the now defunct laptop.

c) Financial Regulations - No amendments required

d) Risk Assessment Physical Assets - No amendments required

e) Financial Risk Assessment- No amendments required

f) Data Protection Policy- No amendments required

g) Data Publication Scheme – Contact details and web address were updated

h) Insurance Policy- This was considered suitable for the Council's assets.

i) Website Accessibility Policy- The website provider uses a standard policy. The website is WCAG 2.2 compliant.

13. Data & IT Policy

This was circulated in August 2025. It was agreed to adopt this policy. Councillors were reminded of the need to remove all Council emails from their private email accounts following the move to gov.uk email addresses and to delete emails containing personal data when no longer required.

14. Internal Auditor

It was agreed to re-appoint Trevor Brown as the Council's internal auditor for the year ending 31st March 2026, if he is willing to continue this role. The clerk wished to note her appreciation to Mr Brown for his diligence, clarity and supportive assistance throughout the audit.

15. Code of Conduct

Councillors adopted the Local Government Association's Code of Conduct. The clerk will recirculate this to remind Councillors of their obligations, especially concerning the new category of interests to declare.

16. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Report

The report for the period ending 31st March 2026 was approved and will be sent to East Suffolk Council for publication.

The clerk will seek confirmation of clawback dates for the various sums received from ESC.

17. Correspondence

As per Standing Orders, with Councillors' consent, the Vice-Chair opened the meeting during two items of correspondence to hear views and comments from residents present.

Introductory email from Stephen Molyneux, the new County Councillor for our area – *noted.*

Village Hall Committee regarding projects using CIL funds- *A resident on the Village Hall Committee outlined the two base-surface options for the proposed project. Councillors recalled previous discussions about the level of CIL funding allocated and noted that there was flexibility to increase the contribution above £5,000 if required. It was therefore agreed to support the higher-cost surface option, as it is expected to provide a better appearance and greater durability.*

Village Hall Committee requesting a donation towards the community Big Lunch event – *It was agreed to donate £440 to this project.*

Update from Suffolk Parishes Road Safety Group- *noted.*

Email asking seeking thoughts on the Quiet Lane project in the village – *the clerk has responded with thoughts shared from residents who live on one of the village Quiet Lanes.*

Request for additional dog waste bins in the village – *It was agreed to purchase two new dog bins using CIL funds at a cost of around £160 each, with the locations to be agreed. The annual emptying charges from ESSL were also noted and agreed.*

Email from parishioner regarding involvement in the regular PC meetings & mailchimp communications- *the clerk has responded.*

Email from ESC re £1.5 million Thriving Places Investment Fund – *forwarded to Village Hall Committee member. They have now applied for this funding.*

Sizewell Southern Transport Forum on 3rd June 2026 6-8pm – *Cllr. Montgomery will attend.*

Request to donate towards the *Four Rivers Project* which is testing, monitoring and reporting water quality in rivers in our area. *It was agreed to donate £150.00 CIL funds for purchasing additional testing supplies as this project benefits the whole village.*

Email from resident regarding the Council's response to DC/25/2997/FUL Ancona solar application – *Cllr. Hurlock left the meeting for this item.*

Councillors discussed the application and the potential impact on nearby residents. It was agreed that the Vice-Chair will attend a site meeting to view the location from one of the affected properties.

The clerk will recirculate the resident's email so that Councillors can consider any additional mitigation measures to recommend to East Suffolk Council, reflecting both the concerns originally raised by the Parish Council in August and the further issues highlighted by residents.

Barclays- Mandate change confirmation. *Councillors Judd and Perry to try to gain access.*

18. Councillor reports

There were no additional reports on actions.

19. Matters to be raised at the next meeting

Possible replacement of Village sign

20. Next meeting

The next meeting was confirmed as being 7pm on 22nd July 2026.

The Vice-Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9pm.

Signed

Date