

THARSTON AND HAPTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes

The Annual Parish Meeting of Tharston and Hapton to be held at Hapton Community Cabin, Hapton on Wednesday 13th May 2026 at 6.30 pm

This is a public meeting for members of the parish to meet, and to hear a summary of activities and achievements from local groups in the community.

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence

Jenna Goodall-Browne sent her apologies all agreed to accept.
David Daniels sent his apologies all agreed to accept

2. Chairman's welcome and Parish Council Report

The chair thanked his councillors for all their hard work this year and commented that it was a pleasure to have such a wonderful team to serve the Parish. It has been a very productive year and we are moving on the right direction. We are happy to welcome Jess Chaney to the council

3. Approval of the minutes of the last APM on 15th May 2025

All approved

4. County Councillor Reports

No report

5. District Councillor Reports

Kim Carsok sent the following report

Community grants:

Members' Ward grants – I have £2,000 available this year (hopefully to spread across the 4 parishes)

Community Action Fund - £500,000 available for new projects, deadline 16th August

New Community Facilities upgrades grant - £500,000 available, for fixing/refurbishing/upgrading existing community infrastructure, deadline 16th August

£150,000 in Bloom grant £1 per person in a parish, match funded – a new round will open soon (you can apply only if your parish has not already been granted the full amount based on £1 per person in the parish)

Leisure Facilities capital investments:

Wymondham leisure centre is having solar panels installed imminently, some disruption to customers in the car park to be expected

Framingham Earl Sports Centre has had planning permission approved for plans to expand the site including a gym, studio, and upgrades to changing rooms

Diss new leisure centre has also had planning permission and approval from cabinet to proceed with the build; construction should begin within the next few weeks.

Kett's Park in Wymondham – we are considering plans to expand facilities at this site, to include an expanded café, soft play, studio extension, walking path, and 2nd 3G all-weather pitch. Currently doing surveys and working with architects on drawings and costings.

Food Waste Collections:

The phased introduction of food waste collections will begin soon. This was delayed due to a (largely predictable) supply and demand issue across the country with specialist lorries not being able to be produced as quickly as had been hoped. Residents in phase 1 will receive a letter followed by delivery of a food waste bin and indoor kitchen caddy.

East Pye Solar:

The East Pye project will go to the planning inspectorate stage. Residents must register by 10 June as an interested person on the government website if they wish to make any comment against this scheme, or to listen in to the hearings etc. You do not have to be a direct neighbour of the scheme, anyone in the country can register to object and we encourage every member of the household to register individually. At this stage you only need make a small comment as to why you are interested.

4. Hapton School

We continue to build on our strength as a Federation, working together to ensure the best outcomes for our children. Our continued use of the minibus enables our children to enjoy a rich and varied school experience, as well as preparing them for the changes that high school brings. As you may be aware, there is a national decline in the birth rate, which in turn is impacting on pupil numbers nationally. At present, our pupil numbers remain stable, but we are expecting a reduction in our September intake. This is a common picture locally. Across the federation, we invested in marketing for the three schools to encourage interest and this has resulted in some new pupils transferring to us within the academic year. Local Links We were delighted to be joined by several members of the Local Community at our recent Federation Futures careers fair, which was designed to inspire the future aspirations of our children. We hope that this event will support the children in understanding the importance of the skills learnt at school and their future ambitions. We held this event at Winfarthing, utilising the minibus to bring all three schools together. In the summer, Hapton will once again be hosting the Federation Summer Picnic. Governance We continue to seek additional governors across the Federation to support strategic oversight. We are keen to encourage members with experience within and outside the education sector, but with skills which will complement our vision across a variety of

areas. In particular, those with experience of Finance, Health and Safety, Safeguarding (which may include work or experience of working in health/social care) and of course any school experience. If you are aware of anyone who may be interested, please do encourage them to contact the office at Winfarthing.

5. Tharston Parish Church

No report

6. Hapton Parish Church

St Margaret's church, Hapton, is one of 7 churches within the Parish of Upper Tas Valley All Saints and along with Fundenhall PCC we make up the Upper Tas Valley Benefice.

Revd Dawn Davidson our Priest in

Charge resigned in February this year and we are now in an interregnum and waiting to see what replacement clergy the Diocese are suggesting. In the meantime, Christine Minns is acting as volunteer co-ordinator for the Benefice.

In the Summer, from April to September inclusive, we host a monthly main Sunday morning service plus a few special services including our "Christmas Carols" service.

Details of which church is holding a Sunday service at other times, are always displayed in the church porch.

The church is normally open for private worship each day.

We would like to record our thanks to the volunteers who manage to keep the graves tidy with the grass cut regularly.

We are grateful to the Parish Council for their grant towards the costs and continue to be interested in supporting the Parish in community events whenever possible.

We are looking at expenses to be incurred this year for the upkeep of the church, and have a

Quinquennial inspection in September 2026 which will help to clarify our future plan

We will stay connected with the Parish Council regarding proposed fund-

raising events and hope we may continue to work together on community initiatives.

Our thanks to the church cleaners, the flower arrangers, and all who support church social events.

Michelle Martin and Anthony Bate

Church wardens, St Margaret's Church Hapton, part of the Upper Tas Valley Benefice.

7. Tharston Charities

THARSTON POORS' ALLOTMENTS CHARITY

This small Charity formed in 1804, has an annual income for £300 per annum derived from 2 small parcels of land in Tharston.

We try to encourage people to apply for a small grant which extended to Students embarking on university who reside in Tharston.

There are 4 Trustees, whose appointments are for a 4-year term.

The current Trustees are Gerald Barnes, Jimmy Mills, Sue Hubbard and Helen Lawson.

Susan Hubbard has stood down as a trustee and if the parish council are happy, she will stand again. All agreed

8. Footpath Warden

The Footpath warden gave the following report
Not much to say and all footpaths are well used. We have benefitted from the circular walk and two new stiles on FP33 that replace the damaged ones. The route maps for the walk saying 6 mile when it is 6km and this wording will be replaced.

9. Tree warden

No report

10. Redwings

Tharston & Hapton APM: Update from Redwings Horse Sanctuary (May 2026)

Apologies for not being able to attend in person, but I am having to work out of Norfolk to implement some significant structural changes to the charity. Like many organisations and businesses, Redwings has been severely impacted by increased running costs. For Redwings, this has resulted in our rising costs no longer being sustainable, with four years of costs exceeding income. This situation has had such a continued impact that, even after closing our site in Monmouthshire in 2024, we have now had to close another two sites to reset the Charity for the future.

Our costs per horse or donkey in our care (rehoming where we can) in Norfolk, using our Inhouse vets and services, is less than half the cost of keeping a horse or donkey in a remote site. Our Norfolk sites and our Essex site can run far more cost effectively. It is this work that is taking me away at present whilst we move the horses and donkeys to other Redwings sites and close these centres.

Our centres in Norfolk remain at the heart of our work, with two being open to supporters and the public. Our visitor centres are now open 4 days a week – Fridays to Mondays. There are outside groups from other charities based at our centres, including Wellbeing and Dementia, both of which benefit from cafes and being able to walk outside and engage with the rescued herds. Our site in Essex remains open and as a visitor centre.

Our education work continues; we run apprenticeships and work with colleges in Norfolk and beyond. Our vets receive students who want to learn about non-commercial practice, or our specialist work in geriatric horse care, nutrition, behaviour, or biosecurity.

For clarification, our site at Hapton, although has access through by footpath, is not open to visitors. The only ad hoc visitors on our fields and in our barn should be our veterinary team and farriers. Should any suspicious activity concern you do phone

our Head Office at Hapton on 01508 481000 or email info@redwings.co.uk

11. AOB
None

