

THARSTON AND HAPTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held at
The Community Building, Holly Lane, Hapton
On Wednesday 15th April 2026 at 7pm.

In Attendance:

Mr N Potter (chair)

Mr T Ward

MR V Blake

Mr G Bleach

Mrs Jess Chaney

Mrs J Goodall Browne – arrived 19.05pm

Mr A Arber (clerk)

1 Member of the Public

1. **Public Participation**– County and District Council reports can also be received during this time. (10 minutes maximum).

No Report from County Councillor Alison Thomas

District Councillor Kim Carsok emailed the following report

I am sure you are already aware of the government's intention to move ahead with the proposals to split Norfolk up into three unitary councils. The map attached was published on the HOC library a week ago, showing the proposed boundaries. In my opinion, this will greatly impoverish the 'East Norfolk' Council as the majority of business rates and higher tax band properties in Norfolk will be taken in by Greater Norwich and much of the costs for things like coastal erosion and adult social care will be borne by East Norfolk.

In our last cabinet meeting, we approved the final decision to build the new Diss leisure centre beside the mere on the old John Grose garage site. This has also been approved by planning so works will begin on site soon. Framingham Earl Sports Centre's expansion design has also been approved at planning committee.

Cabinet also approved plans for expansion of facilities at Kett's Park, where we intend to expand the café, build a soft play in the existing hall and add an extension for a new multi-purpose studio room. Additionally, the changing rooms and toilets will be refurbished and reconfigured, and pending funding approval from the Football Foundation, another all-weather pitch and additional car parking will be built. This project is at the early stage, so we have approved funding to explore design options, costs, and lease arrangements.

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2. Apologies – To consider accepting apologies for absence.

David Daniels sent his apologies all agreed to accept

3. Minutes – To approve the minutes of the last meeting held on the 18th of March 2026

The minutes were agreed as a true record of the meeting held on 18th March and the chair duly signed the minutes

Proposed Nick Potter Seconded Vic Blake

4. Declarations of interests – To receive any declarations of personal or prejudicial interest from members on any item to be discussed.

None

5. Planning

- Planning applications

None this month

- To discuss the Planned Open Space Land

The meeting with MP Ben Goldsborough was cancelled due to ill health on Bens part and it has been rescheduled for Friday May 15th to get the project moving forward. The clerk noted that we should arrange a date for a visit to Aylsham FC or the New Blofield Sports hub that has just been finished. The clerk will also meet with The FA to look at funding options through them.

It was agreed to sort out dates asap for all to attend

- To discuss Planning Applications and any received after the agenda is posted

None

6. Governance – To update our public participation scheme

The clerk has updated this, and it will be on the Policy update when this is done when he does the updates

The clerk had worked on the Financial Regulations regarding the use of the credit card to buy items for the upcoming events along with the possibility to take card payments with a Card machine and he had found Square System the best one to use.

The updated wording is as below

- 6.6. Tharston and Hapton Parish Council has a debit card any corporate credit, debit or purchase card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Clerks use, but two councillors may use the card to purchase items for events and will be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £750 unless authorised by Council in writing before any order is placed. Transactions and purchases made will be reported to the Council at each meeting within the monthly accounts.

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The statement will be fully reconciled each month and paid in full each month by direct debit.

- 6.7 Tharston and Hapton Parish Council has approved the use of a contactless payment machine (card reader) for the use on events at its meeting of 15th April 2026. The Administrator is The Clerk, and the machine will be tethered to the Unity Trust Current Account for all payments to be paid into. The Administrator will ensure all receipts received are reported to the council. The machine app will be put one of two councillors mobile to take payments at events and the statements will be sent to the clerk once completed and logged in the receipts on Scribe and any charges will be noted as Payments on scribe.

This wording has been approved by our Internal Auditor so we can update the Financial Regulations when we do the Policies update.

Proposed Nick Potter Seconded Graham Bleach

1. Finance –

- To note receipts in March 2026
The following receipts have been received
- | | | |
|------|------------|---------|
| HMRC | Vat Refund | £786.92 |
|------|------------|---------|
- To approve the following payments for April 2026**
- To approve Payments to Parish Clerk Alan Arber for March salary and expenses £851.48
 - To approve payment for Clerks pension for March £297.32
 - To approve payment to HMRC for tax and NI £565.46
 - To approve payment to Handyman for salary and expenses March £360.34
 - To approve payment to Viking for Year-end Stationery £122.31
 - To approve payment to NPTS for annual subscription £484.62
 - To approve payment to Clerk for website subscription £302.40
 - **To approve payment to Solicitors for land registry work on community area £500.00**
Need to get clarification what the extra work was done before payment is paid to Ashtons. Jenna to be copied into the email when sent
 - To approve payment to ICO for annual subscription £47.00
 - To approve monthly payment for Wi-Fi in the cabin £55.20

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- To approve payment to Scribe set up licence and initial costs £537.60
- To approve payment to Scribe monthly cost £44.40
- To approve Payment to Sonya Blythe for internal Audit report £120.00
- To approve payment to O2 for security cameras £79.99
- To approve payment to Lloyds for monthly credit card charge £3.00
- To approve payment to Unity Trust for Monthly bank Charges £7.00
- Credit Card Payments
- Wood for orchard new fence for Community payback £254.51
- Printer Ink and extra stationery for Year-end £35.40
- Microsoft 365 Yearly subscription £104.99
- Charcoal for BBQ £55.98
- Plants and compost for Planter £18.98
- Defib Pads £77.94

Proposed Nick Potter Seconded Vic Blake

7.1. To receive the financial position of the council

We started the month of with a balance of £18,893.91 and with receipts of £786.92 in VAT reclaim it took the balance to £19,680.83 and after today's payments of £4,925.92 we start May with a balance of £14,754.91 but we have a vat reclaim figure of £495.79 already outstanding which is a good amount. We will also get our first precept payment of £20,192.72 in late April making our balance a healthy £34,947.63

7.2 To receive the year-end Figures

We finished the year with a balance of £18,893.91 which is very healthy

7.3 To receive and comment on the year end AGAR section 1 Annual Governance Statements

The clerk took the councillors through the Annual Governance Statements, and all agreed they were correct

Proposed Nick Potter Seconded Tim Ward

7.4 To receive and comment on the year end AGAR section 2 Accounting Statements

The clerk took the councillors through the Accounting Statements, and all agreed they were correct

Proposed Tim Ward Seconded Nick Potter

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7.5 To receive the internal auditors report for year end 2025-2026

The clerk took the councillors through the Internal Audit report, and it was pleasing to note that there were no recommendations to be worked on, and the Internal Audit report was excellent.

The clerk was thanked for his work on this, and everyone was very happy with the Internal Auditors findings with no issues found

7.6 To discuss the putting some reserves into either a savings account or CCLA investment account

The clerk was worried that our reserves were not working well for us and when attending a recent SLCC Norfolk AGM he had met with both the Councils bank and CCLA. It was felt that we need to make our monies work better for us and that utilising our savings account should be done asap especially with the month end April balance being £34,947.63 after the precept payment came in, we should move £15,000 into our savings account to get interest where possible as it can be accessed a lot easier from this account and moved around quicker. All councillors agreed to do this

Proposed Graham Bleach Seconded Jenna Goodall Browne

8. **Highways** – to receive any updates regarding highways and footpaths.

- Highway issues

Patching work has been done on Fundenhall Road.

Questions were asked what they signs were on the road and it was felt this was for road widening for the pylons.

Questions were asked regarding the cones outside a House in Norwich Road by the 30-mph sign. Highways to be contacted.

9. **To receive an update on the following current issues and to consider any necessary actions:**

- Tree warden's Report

No report

- Footpath Issues

FP5 nettles need cutting back and get the handyman to do this asap.

- Maintenance and Handyman's report

The clerk had spoken with the handyman on his works and given him a couple of jobs and he will supervise the community payback team on the 5th of May till the clerk arrives back from his training course.

The handyman had submitted his report, and it is in its usual detail.

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10. To receive an update on the Hapton Community Project

The clerk had discussed with the handyman the issues with the gazebo, and he felt that it was best to fully check it over with councillors and we will try and get the cover repaired if possible and this would be done asap. Once this is done this would be erected by Community Payback on either 5th or 19th May when they are due on site.

The clerk also reported that we had only received one bag of Charcoal and the other was returned to the contractor as the bag was split and he would reorder another bag asap.

All agreed to order the bag of charcoal and some firelights

To discuss the purchase of a card reader for events

The clerk has looked into this and as he uses them for his charity work, he had found the best device is the square reader and this can be purchased from Amazon, and the App can be put on a Councillors phone only (due to Financial Regs) for them to also take payments that way. He is happy to show councillors how it works if needed.

The cost would be £22.94 per reader. All agreed to order this asap

Proposed Nick Potter Seconded Graham Bleach

To discuss the purchase of items for the Parish Fete

As noted earlier the clerk had inserted the wording for this to happen in our Financial Regulations and the Internal Auditor had approved these for us straight away.

It was agreed that any two councillors can use the Credit card moving forward.

Proposed Nick Potter Seconded Jess Chaney

To discuss the costs for a craft group to use the cabin

It was asked that the craft group use the cabin for free on one day a week to see if the group were well used and after three months this would be looked into again. All agreed to support this initiative, and a page would be put in the newsletter informing people of the group and if they wished to join.

To discuss the installing of rabbit fencing

The clerk had spoken with the contractor, and he had come back with a cost of £3500 for the installation of rabbit fencing on the garden and it would need to be fully enclosed something we were unsure would look good. Having had conversations with the handyman we could do this cheaper but wondered if it would cheapen the area as the rabbits would always find a way into the garden and eat anything we plant. A discussion ensued and it was

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felt that we should look into this with the handyman as they feel it would be easy to do with help

11. To discuss the latest Pylons information

The clerk brought to the councils attention a new Planning Inspectorate consultation on some changes to the application to be help in Ipswich again on 30/4 and 1/5. The clerk has registered a slot to speak if the council felt it was relevant that he should especially as they are asking for more details on Air Quality and Traffic. The 2 sessions are from 9am to 5pm both days. It was agreed the clerk would attend as last time.

12. To note our comments to East Pye solar

We still await details of the DCO and as, yet this is on hold due to issues that have been found by Highways, The Flood Agency, and Environment Agency. Meeting at Hempnall Village Hall

13 To note information on Tas way energy park application

Still on hold no further information

14. To discuss the Norfolk Homes land Meeting and what next steps are

Detailed earlier under the planned open space part of the agenda.

15. To discuss Parish Projects

- Newsletter
The next issue is planned to be ready to come out late May, and I need a page from Hapton Meadow Working Group or a poster on the Fete idea please with all the details
- Sam Machine
Working okay
- Tharston Phone box
Nothing to report on this
- Parish Councillors/Clerk training/Personal development
The clerk has booked his spot at the SLCC National Conference so as to ensure he got in as the last one was oversubscribed and people had to stay offsite
- New Defibrillator and Defib Training dates to be fixed.
Nothing to report
- Surveyors Land and Christmas tree Order
Nothing to report
- Hapton Phone Box
Still being well used but needs more and this could go in the newsletter.

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- Neighbourhood watch
Nothing to report
- Meeting House Field
Nothing to report on this but needs cutting asap.
- Parish Orchard at Old Village Hall site
This has had a new fence built by Community payback and a full renovation by them and they did a great job, and David Daniels was very happy
- Dog mess in the village
Still an issue

17. To discuss Green Initiatives moving forward including recycling and actions on the biodiversity policy

Nothing on this

- **Green recycling of blister packs and razors**
The clerk to order the recycling box asap
- **To note the application to the South Norfolk in Bloom application for £990 match funded by SNDC to the same amount**
This has been submitted with a grant request for £2000 which we hope will be approved asap.

18. Public Participation (10 minutes)

A parishioner asked that we get a mowing policy for Meeting House field so its cut a certain way, and it was agreed a 2-metre edge on the field all around the edge. All agreed this would be asked of the contractor.

For any Parishioners to comment on any items that have been discussed during the meeting only

19. To receive items for the next agenda.

Long Stratton FC and FA meeting
Aylsham FC Visit.
History Group Meeting in June

Next Meetings Weds 13th May 2026

Annual Assembly of the Parish 6.30pm to 7pm

Annual Parish Council Meeting 7.00 pm onwards