

Hockering Parish Council

Chairman: J Blackwell Tel: 07808 927910 e-mail: jonty.b@btinternet.com	Parish Clerk Margaret Ridgwell Tel: 01603 871636 e-mail: hockeringparishcouncil@gmail.com
--	---

MINUTES of the **Parish Council Meeting** held on Tuesday 8th July 2025 at the Village Hall, Hockering.

Cllrs Present at the Meeting: G Bambridge, P Cocker, P McIntee and R Neave

Also Present: Parish Clerk and 5 residents.

- 1. Welcome. To receive apologies for absence** – apologies were received from Cllr Blackwell and Cllr Higgins. Cllr Pippa Cocker chaired the meeting in the absence of Cllr Blackwell.
- 2. To receive any declarations of interest** – Cllr McIntee declared that as he is on the FoHPS committee, he would not vote on any financial matter concerning the Primary School. Cllr Bambridge declared an interest if there were discussions concerning the call for sites for building development in Hockering.
- 3. To approve the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting on the 10th June** – having previously been circulated to all councillors, Cllr McIntee proposed, and Cllr Neave seconded that the Minutes be approved and signed. All agreed.
- 4. To receive County/District Councillor reports** – A written report had been received from County Councillor Bill Borrett which is attached to these minutes. District Councillor Bambridge said that he did not have any updates to report on.
- 5. To receive updates from:**
 - a) **Village Hall** – There will be a meeting of the Village Hall Committee at the end of July. Cllr Cocker will arrange for the portrait of His Majesty The King to be framed ready for hanging in the Hall.
 - b) **Village Church** – It was reported that there had been no applications received for the post of vicar and the position will be readvertised in two weeks' time, but it is unlikely that anyone will be in place before the end of the year. Services have had to be cancelled as there are now only 3 Lay Readers to take services. Another Coffee Morning is planned for the 26th July.
 - c) **Primary School/Friends of Hockering Primary School** – Cllr McIntee reported that the FoHPS are planning a major project for the summer holiday, namely replacing the school toilets. Co-ordinating the available time of the contractor and school staff is proving to be difficult. Cllr Neave pointed out that the Village Poors & Townlands Charity could help with the funding of this project if the PTA approached them. The FOHPS had sent in a Grant Application Form to the Parish Council to help with the expenses for the Village Fete and Cllr Bambridge proposed and Cllr Neave seconded that a grant of £500 be given. All councillors were in agreement. It was suggested that the organisational plans for the Fete be sent to the Parish Council so costings could be checked.
 - d) **Playing Field – Ownership & Management** – Following discussions with the present organisers of the Football Club and Playing Field, it was agreed that new Terms of Reference be drawn up to ensure that a Board of Trustees be appointed to oversee the Management Committee of both organisations. Cllr Cocker agreed to help with this and would take on a reviewing role during the transition period to represent the interests of the Parish Council. It was suggested that a meeting be held in September/October to review the situation, either before or after our regular meeting and with public excluded but with minutes (also confidential) taken. Various maintenance work is needed on site, including the thinning of the trees, strimming the long grass around the old gym trim trail and ensuring the area is safe. It was suggested that an additional dog bin might be needed. An update on progress will be given to the Parish Council at the next meeting in September.
 - e) **Village Maintenance** – The public areas of grass are being maintained by Cllr Higgins. It was noted that a large hedge is overhanging the footway on the corner of The Glebe and the owner will be contacted requesting that it is trimmed.

f) **Footpaths** – There are no problems at present with the footpaths.

6. Open Forum for Public Participation – There were no matters raised which were not dealt with elsewhere in the agenda.

7. To receive updates on the following Working Parties:

- a) **Neighbourhood Plan** – Cllr McIntee reported that the Government has withdrawn all funding for the creation of Neighbourhood Plans, so it was unlikely that Hockering would be able to afford the costs involved in engaging the experts necessary to produce such a Plan. Cllr Bambridge proposed and Cllr Neave seconded that Cllr McIntee and Cllr Blackwell liaise to produce a Statement on the future of Hockering for the residents at the next meeting.
- b) **Breckland Local Plan** – A public meeting was held in Hockering on the 29th June to discuss the proposals received for two large house-building projects in the village. Approximately 60 people attended the meeting and all agreed that the proposals were not viable for two main reasons: that the size of the sites would completely change the character of Hockering from a rural village into an urban town; and that the transport links and infrastructure are totally inadequate for such a large increase in population. The views of the attendees were sent to Breckland District Council and they will be producing their Local Plan for consultation sometime in September. The Parish Council and individuals will be able to put forward their views when the consultation is announced. A report of the public meeting is attached to these minutes.
- c) **Play Area** – The annual RoSPA inspection report has been received and there are several areas which need urgent attention. These include rotten timbers on the swing supports, and lack of adequate bark covering. Cllrs Blackwell, McIntee and Higgins will inspect the area with the report in mind and produce a plan to see that work is carried out to ensure the safety of the area and the equipment.

8. To discuss the following:

- a) **Purchase of Village Noticeboard** – This will be discussed at the next meeting in September.

9. Highway Matters:

- a) It was noted that advance warning had been received that the entrance to Wood Lane from the A47 would be closed for three months starting in October and Cllr Bill Borrett has been contacted to act on our behalf to ensure that any diversion route does not mean that HGVs will be directed through Hockering, along Heath Road to rejoin the B1535. This road is a designated Lorry Route between the A47 Norwich to Dereham road and the A1067 Norwich to Fakenham road and concerns were expressed that local 'rat-runs' will be used whilst this long period of closure and disruption is in place, causing increased traffic through Hockering. Unfortunately, Cllr Borrett has been unwell and has not been able to follow up our request at the moment.
- b) **Parking on Heath Road opposite The Glebe** – A complaint had been received regarding this matter and residents are advised to be aware of the Highway Code rules concerning parking near a road junction. If there are concerns that the parking is dangerous then the Police should be contacted at the time.

10. Gov.uk Email Addresses for Councillors – Cllr Cocker proposed and Cllr Bambridge seconded that the Clerk should contact Parish Online to arrange for Gov.uk email addresses to be purchased for all councillors. All agreed.

11. Correspondence for circulation – all relevant correspondence had been circulated to councillors and dealt with.

12. Planning Matters –

- a) An Application had been received, PL/2025/0950/CLOPUD, concerning the Proposal: Single storey side porch extension, additional fenestration, demolition of single storey rear extension; Site: Stonycroft, 91 Heath Road, Hockering. All councillors were in favour of this application.
- b) Advance notice had been received from MPH Ltd that they will be submitting a retrospective Change of Use Planning Application to NCC to provide additional storage and recycling space at the existing recycling centre at Stone Road, Hockering. Councillors agreed that they have no objections at this stage and will consider the Planning Application when it is received.
- c) No planning decisions/appeals had been received since the last meeting.

13. Finance & Governance Matters

- a) **To approve the following payments and note Bank Balance** – The payments for June had been circulated and were approved by all, following a proposal by Cllr McIntee, seconded by Cllr Bambridge.
- b) The Bank reconciliation for June was seen and signed and all councillors received a copy of the 1st Quarter Position Statement.

PAYMENTS FOR APPROVAL IN JUNE: THE CO-OPERATIVE BANK COMMUNITY ACCOUNT				
BALANCE AS AT 10.06.25			£23,677.36	
PAY TYPE	PAYEE	DESCRIPTION	ACTUAL AMOUNT	VAT
BACS	M Ridgwell	June Salary & Exps	301.20	
BACS	HMRC	PAYE to Period 03	71.20	
BACS	Norfolk PTS	Training for P McIntee	273.60	45.60
BACS	Zurich Insurance	Annual Insurance Premium	639.27	68.49
BACS	B Higgins	Petrol for PC Lawnmower	20.00	3.33
BACS	Friends of Hockering Primary School	Donation for Village Fete expenses	500.00	
		Less	1,805.27	117.42
BALANCE C/FWD 08.07.25			£21,872.09	

14. To receive any new items for the next agenda – To progress and receive updates on matters raised above.

15. To note the next meeting of the Parish Council – This will be on Tuesday 9th September 2025 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 9.00pm

Signed

HOCKERING PARISH COUNCIL

NOTES of the Meeting held on Sunday 29th June 2025 at the Village Hall, Hockering.

Cllrs Present at the Meeting: G Bambridge, P Cocker, P McIntee and J Blackwell

Also Present: Cllr Neeve, Cllr Higgins and 60 residents.

Cllrs welcomed residents to the meeting and started with a brief overview of the proposed SDA's from Breckland Council. The floor was then opened to the public to share their comments. Comments raised on the floor included:

Infrastructure:

- Roads: Current road infrastructure is not fit for purpose for use by construction traffic.
- Public footpaths are limited and some run through the proposed development areas.
- Water and sewage can't cope now let alone with extra houses.
- Currently there are not enough recreation areas for the increasing number of young people.
- No room in local schools.
- No room at doctors' surgery currently.
- Not enough jobs nor businesses in the area currently, let alone to sustain this level of growth.

- Could bin men, postmen and other services cope?
- Could Police/ambulance and fire service cope?
- Local shop will be at risk (if building a new shop) same with treasured farm shops and village pub.

Environmental:

- Increase in pollution as all residents will need transport to get to places of work (this is in contradiction to Labour's Net Zero policy).
- Wildlife and farming: Bats and Newts in the area.
- Development will take over important agricultural land.
- More concrete causes flooding and bad drainage if any put in place.

Village Character:

- Development will significantly change the character of the village.
- Proposed development is the equivalent size of Swaffham.
- Modern housing estates are badly planned and built with narrow and tight roads with little to no parking. These houses will be in stark contrast with the character and feel of our historic village.
- Rubbish and building waste left at every building site going.
- Shoddy and unsafe workmanship.
- Eyesore.
- Villagers raised concerns over the amount of social/immigrant housing that will be included.

Social Mobility:

- How does this development fit with Labour's Net 20-minute policy. There is no existing infrastructure in place to support this number of houses and public transport is already struggling and unreliable.
- No local people buying up and renting out at ridiculous rates.
- Long wait for driving lessons and tests etc.
- Promise to sort out/ upgrade junctions, crossings and public buildings but never followed through with.

General comments:

- It will kill the village.
- Hockering will change into a town.
- Has the number of unoccupied houses in Dereham been taken into account.
- Has the dead area of land beside the new A47 been considered?
- People live in Hockering because they want to live in a semi-rural area, this development will change that irrevocably.
- Crime statistically goes up with more houses.
- Increase in insurance costs for existing residents.

Poll:

Do you think the current infrastructure in and around Hockering could support the plan?

Yes: 0%

No: 100%

Will the development change the village in a negative way?

Yes: 100%

No: 0%

Will the development damage the existing local businesses?

Yes: 75%

No: 25%

Will the development adversely affect drainage/flooding/environment?

Yes: 100%

No: 0%

Will the development damage the local ecology?

Yes: 100%

No: 0%

Will this be a good thing for Hockering socially?

Yes: 0%

No: 100%

Cllr BILL BORRETT

Parish report for the Elmham and Mattishall Division

July 2025

I apologise if you have been wondering where I am, much to my surprise my appendix burst and I have been in the Norfolk and Norwich. I am glad to say that I have made a complete recovery, but it has got in the way of everything.

The Government has announced its new Devolution and Local Government Bill this week. (Called the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill)

If only it did what it says on the tin. It includes the following:

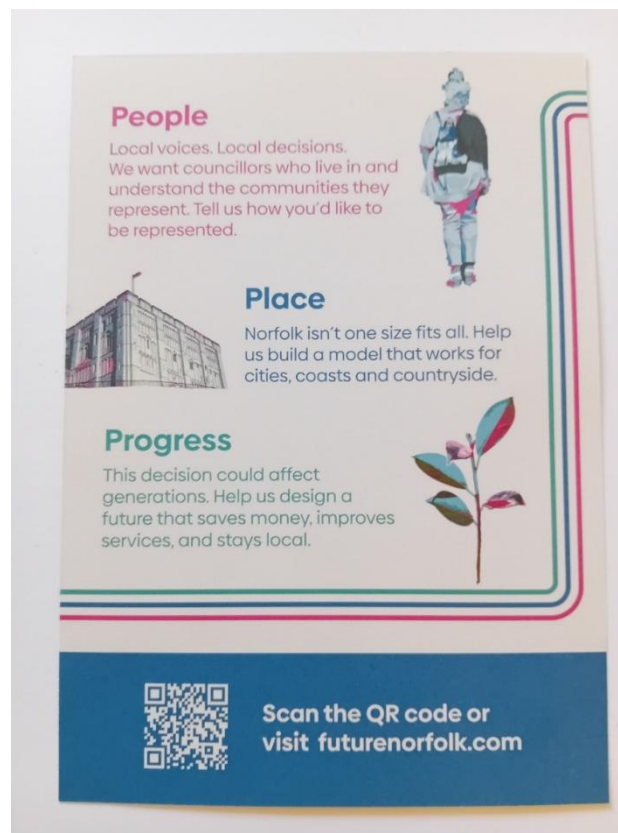
It introduces the Supplementary Vote System for electing Mayors and Police and Crime Commissioners. Removing the first past the post system currently used.

Direction powers. The Bill introduces a power for the Secretary of State to direct a Council(s) to develop and submit proposals for Local Government Reorganisation.

The Bill will create a new Ministerial power to enable the Secretary of State to mandate the creation of new Strategic Authorities (SA's) with a directly elected Mayor, without the consent of the relevant Councils in areas where one does not already exist. This removes any local choice, and it looks like the Government will impose the extra layer of Government in the form of a Strategic Authority for Norfolk and Suffolk with a Mayor whether we want one or not. I am extremely disappointed as it takes the decision away from Norfolk and gives it to the Minister in London.



Despite everything I still want everyone to have an opportunity for you to have your say, Future Norfolk is the route to do it, it has been set up by a consortium of Norfolk's Councils and we will submit all your thoughts to the Government in advance of their decisions, so please take the time to go online and respond.



Community Fund

From 1st July, local groups across Norfolk can apply for funding through the newly launched Norfolk Community Fund. The Norfolk County Council grant scheme is designed to support grassroots organisations at the heart of every community.

Each of Norfolk's 84 county councillors has been allocated £5,000 to distribute within their division, ensuring that funding decisions are made by those who know their communities best.

The fund offers grants between £200 and £2,500 to support projects that promote things like social inclusion, volunteering, and community engagement.

For grants of £500 or more, groups will be asked to match 50% of the funding through a Crowdfunding platform, potentially doubling the impact. Smaller grants under £500 do not require match funding, though groups are welcome to crowdfund to increase their total.

With an estimated 10,000 voluntary, community, and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations in Norfolk, including 3,500 registered charities and 6,500 informal groups, the fund aims to provide a vital boost at a time when many are facing financial pressures. If you are part of a local group and you could benefit from a grant, contact your local county councillor with details of your project and the funding you need. You can find their contact details on the Norfolk County Council website. For more information about the Norfolk Community Fund, visit norfolk.gov.uk/communityfund

Norfolk's market towns invited to apply for grants to attract more visitors

Projects that are aimed at increasing sales and footfall in market towns will be able to apply for grants of between £1,000 and £5,000 through an initiative being rolled out across the whole of Norfolk.

Organisations and businesses are being invited to apply for the Love Your Market Town fund's Pride of Place grants to fund ideas designed to encourage people to visit and shop in their local towns more frequently. The scheme is supported by Norfolk County Council and applicants have until 31st August to submit their ideas.

Once ideas have been submitted, they will be reviewed by an independent panel and applicants notified of the outcome by Tuesday 30th September.

Applications are welcome from any local groups or business, but any activity must be a brand-new idea and should support multiple areas or services within a Norfolk market town. There is no limit to the kind of activities that can be funded but the idea must have a link to creating interest or increasing footfall in town centres.

[Find more information or express an interest in bidding for a grant via the New Anglia Growth Hub.](#)

More than £3.8m pledged to support apprenticeships through Norfolk levy scheme

Over £3.8m has been pledged by over 30 donating companies in the first two financial years of Apprenticeships Norfolk's Levy Support Scheme, and more than £3.2m has now been transferred to more than 160 businesses - triple the original £1m target.

The aim of the Levy Support Scheme is to connect businesses to share unspent apprenticeship levy funds through levy transfers, and to offer a bespoke matching service and wraparound support to Norfolk employers.

Donating businesses have included Amazon, RWE, and Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital, while Flagship, Norwich School of Hair & Beauty and Sheringham Little Theatre have been among those which have received funds.

[Learn more about the impact report on the Apprenticeships Norfolk website](#)

Norfolk County Council Ranked Among best for Climate Action

Norfolk County Council has been recognised as one of the top-performing local authorities in the UK, according to the latest Climate Action Scorecards.

Published by Climate Emergency UK, the scorecard evaluates councils on key areas such as green energy, sustainable transport, and environmental stewardship.

Norfolk County Council has achieved third place among all county councils in the UK, cementing its position as a national leader in climate action. Its overall score has improved by 3 percentage points since 2023, making it the top-performing council in Norfolk.

The Climate Action Scorecards are an independent assessment of local authority climate action. The full results can be found at <https://councilclimatescorecards.uk/scoring/county/>

The county council's key achievements include:

- **100% Green Electricity:** All council-run buildings use fully renewable electricity.

- **LED Streetlights:** Upgrade saves over 1 million kWh and cuts 200+ tonnes of CO₂ annually.
- **Solar Power:** Rooftop panels now supply 2% of council building electricity.
- **Tree Planting:** Over 600,000 trees planted toward a 1 million tree goal.
- **Electric Buses:** 70 buses introduced in Norwich, saving 3,800 tonnes of CO₂ yearly and improving air quality.

New options assessment work for Norwich Western Link

Norfolk County Council is planning to explore options for a Norwich Western Link to reduce traffic problems and improve travel west of Norwich.

The Council's cabinet will be asked to approve this study, which will include public consultation. The options will cover improving current roads, boosting public transport and active travel (walking, cycling), and building new single or dual carriageway routes.

Traffic congestion in the area causes safety issues, business delays, and problems reaching important places like the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital and Norwich Airport.

Earlier, the Council applied to build a 3.9-mile dual carriageway road but withdrew the plan due to concerns from Natural England about protected barbastelle bats in the area.

Natural England's new guidance, released just before the application deadline, made the previous road plan unlikely to be approved.

Since then, the Council has talked with the Department for Transport (DfT) and has secured provisional funding of £960,000 (two-thirds of the £1.43 million cost) for the study. The DfT also confirmed no need to resubmit earlier business case documents.

The Council will keep consulting Natural England during the study to ensure any chosen options are acceptable.

As a consequence of the bat concerns and previous feedback, it's unlikely that a dual carriageway or a viaduct over the River Wensum will be included in the options.

A report will go to the cabinet in July, with results of the study and consultation expected next summer. Then, a preferred option for the Norwich Western Link may be recommended.