Hockering Parish Council

Chairman:	**Parish Clerk**
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MINUTES of the **Annual Parish Council Meeting** held on Tuesday 19th May 2026 at the Village Hall, Hockering.
Cllrs Present at the Meeting: J Blackwell, G Bambridge, B Higgins, P McIntee and R Neave
Also Present:, Parish Clerk and 3 residents.

1. **Election of Chair -** Cllr McIntee proposed, and Cllr Higgins seconded, that Cllr Blackwell continue his term of office as Chairman. All councillors agreed and Cllr Blackwell signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office form.

2. **Election of Vice-Chair -** Cllr Blackwell proposed, and Cllr Neave seconded, that Cllr McIntee be appointed as Vice-Chair. All councillors agreed and Cllr McIntee signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office form.

3. **Apologies for absence** – There were no apologies

4. **To receive any declarations of interest –** There were no declarations of interest.

5. **To approve the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting on the 14th April –** having previously been circulated to all councillors, Cllr Neave proposed, and Cllr Higgins seconded that the Minutes be approved and signed. All agreed.

6. **To receive County/District Councillor reports –** Cllr Bambridge reported that councils are waiting to hear from the Government that the Local Government Reorganisation proposal has been approved. In Cllr Bambridge's opinion the proposal for one unitary authority has been rushed and is likely to cause many organizational problems and millions of pounds to implement the changes, which could have been avoided if more time had been taken to listen to all arguments. Our previous County Councillor, Bill Borrett, lost the recent election and has been replaced by Paul Carr for the Reform Party. Cllr Bambridge is meeting with Cllr Carr later this week and he will be invited to subsequent Parish Council meetings as the County Council representative.

7. **To consider any matters raised at the Annual Parish Meeting –** It was noted that Mr Hutton had given an excellent presentation on Hockering Woods, and it was confirmed that the opening dates for this year are on the Parish Council website and will be added to local Facebook groups. Hockering Woods, which are privately owned, is an amazing asset to the village and residents are very fortunate to be allowed access. Unfortunately, the rules of access and parking are often ignored, and vandalism is a problem which is a great pity.

8. **Open Forum for Public Participation –** a resident raised the question of whether the Annual Parish Meeting could be better advertised and possibly held at a more convenient time in future. The councillors will consider this suggestion later in the year.

9. **To receive updates from:**
   a) **Village Hall** – Bookings are good, at approximately 20 a month, and finances are reasonable.
   b) **Village Church** – A Coffee Morning is being held on Saturday 23rd May, and a Benefice service will be held on Sunday 24th May. Holy Communion is now held once a month. Thanks were given to Cllr Higgins for cutting the grass in the churchyard.
   c) **Future of Playground** – the playground remains closed for safety reasons at the moment and is

kept locked. The current play equipment will be assessed by RoSPA in June to see what equipment, if any, is safe to use. The current site is inadequate for the needs of the village and the procurement of a new site and play equipment is required as soon as possible.

d) **Primary School/Friends of Hockering Primary School** – the Friends of Hockering School sent a comprehensive report for the Annual Parish Meeting which summarized the work they are doing to support the school. A Summer Fete is planned for the 23rd August at the Village Hall and it was suggested that if the Friends complete a PC Grant Application Form for financial support, this would be considered at the next meeting.

e) **Playing Field** – Cllr McIntee reported that an Extraordinary General Meeting had taken place on the 30th April and 24 people had attended. A Revitalising Group of 11 people has been formed initially and another meeting will be held in the near future. Cllr McIntee said that minutes of all meetings will be signed by three people – himself, Emma Goward and Emma Hart – before the minutes are passed on to the Charity Commission and Community Action Norfolk, for their comments and assistance. The members will represent all groups of residents from the village, such as the local school, local dog walkers, sporting groups and other interested residents. 2 volunteers have come forward: one to act as Secretary and the other as Treasurer for the PFA. Once interim Trustees have been appointed signatories will be approved to open a new bank account as soon as possible and funding sought, so that improvements and renovations to the Pavilion can be planned.

f) **Community Speedwatch Group** – 8 residents have now been registered as part of this group with the Police and 3 sites were approved. Speed checking has commenced and more residents have shown an interest in joining the group. It was suggested that a SAM – Speed Awareness Monitor – machine be purchased by the Parish Council so that it could be moved to different locations in the village on a regular basis to remind drivers of the speed limit. This will be discussed later in the year.

g) **Village Maintenance** – Cllr Higgins confirmed that four new dog bins have been installed, and he has started grasscutting in the communal areas of the village. Unfortunately, two vehicles are parking on the verge, causing damage and making upkeep impossible. It was suggested that a possible solution could be to install planters to make parking difficult. NCC Highways will be asked to ensure that the verges at entrances to the village from the A47 are cut as soon as possible as visibility is becoming obstructed.

10. **To consider future of Hockering Village Newsletter** - two residents have kindly offered to reinstate the Village Newsletter and they will bring a suggested layout and details of deliveries and printing to the June meeting.

11. **To consider future Village Events –** The Friends of Hockering School will be holding a Summer Fete on Saturday 23rd August at the Village Hall. The Parish Council will consider helping by discussing an Application for Grant request at the next meeting.

12. **Correspondence for circulation** – Any correspondence received requiring attention has been discussed under the appropriate agenda heading.

13. **Planning Matters –**

a) Planning Application FUL/2026/0002, site: Recycling Centre, Stone Road, Hockering, Dereham, NR20 3PZ. Proposal to amend planning permission C/3/2017/3002 conditions 2, 3, 8 and 9 to allow HGVs to retrospectively leave the site between 06:00 and 07:00 Mondays to Saturdays. Councillors discussed this retrospective application and agreed that although extending the hours of operation of heavy lorries on a small rural road will be to the general detriment of the countryside in this area, of the road itself, and of those living near to, or using, the roads involved, the Parish Council's previous comments are still relevant and these will be sent to NCC Planning Department again.

b) No Planning Decisions have been received since the last meeting.

14. **Finance & Governance Matters**

a) To approve the following updated policies: Standing Orders, Code of Conduct, Financial Regulations, FOI Publication Scheme, and Risk Assessment & Management Policy, were all approved by Councillors and are available on the PC website.

b) The Asset Register was considered and approved.

c) The Internal Auditors' Report had been received and circulated to councillors prior to the meeting. They confirmed their approval and noted that there were no recommendations to be considered.

d) Following the Internal Auditor's examination of the accounts for the year ending 31st March 2026, the Annual Governance & Accountability Return was considered and the Exempt Certificate approved and signed.

e) The AGAR Annual Governance Statement was agreed and approved.

f) The AGAR Accounting Statements were noted and approved. All AGAR documents will be available on the PC website shortly, together with the Notice of Public Rights when the financial documents will be available for inspection from the 3rd June to the 14th July, by prior arrangement with the Parish Clerk.

g) Payments for April listed below were approved by all, following a proposal by Cllr Bambridge, seconded by Cllr Neave.

APRIL PAYMENTS FOR APPROVAL: ***THE CO-OPERATIVE BANK COMMUNITY ACCOUNT***				
BALANCE AS AT 28.04.26			**£25,454.84**	
PAY TYPE	**PAYEE**	**DESCRIPTION**	**ACTUAL AMOUNT**	**VAT**
BACS	M Ridgwell	Clerk Apr salary and allowances	310.20	
BACS	HMRC	PAYE, Period 01	73.40	
BACS	Hockering Village Hall	Hall Hire, 2 extra meetings	48.00	
BACS	SB Auditing	Annual Internal Audit	125.00	
BACS	Defib Store	Replacement pads	162.00	27.00
BACS	Glasdon	1 dog bin and fixings	185.97	30.99
BACS	MKM Dereham	Concrete for dog bin fixing (Pd by B Higgins)	5.93	0.99
BACS	ESTS Ltd	Post for dog bin (pd by BH)	19.20	3.20
BACS	Tesco	Fuel for PC Lawnmower (pd by BH)	20.00	3.33
BACS	East Anglian Air Ambulance	Donation for First Aid Training	200.00	
		Total	**1,149.70**	**65.51**
BALANCE C/FWD 19.05.26			**£24,305.14**	

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

16. To note date of the next Parish Council meeting – The next meeting will be on the 9th June 2026 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 9.00pm

Signed .....