Hockering Parish Council

Chairman:	**Parish Clerk**
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MINUTES of the **Parish Council Meeting** held on Tuesday 14th July 2026 at the Village Hall, Hockering.
Cllrs Present at the Meeting: J Blackwell, G Bambridge, P McIntee and R Neave.
Also Present: Parish Clerk and 3 residents.

1. **Apologies for absence** – Apologies were received from Cllr Brian Higgins.

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

3. **To approve the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting on the 9th June –** having previously been circulated to all councillors, Cllr Neave proposed, and Cllr McIntee seconded that the Minutes be approved and signed. All agreed.

4. **To receive County/District Councillor reports –** Cllr Bambridge spoke about the Breckland Local Plan and the public consultation which begins on the 3rd August for 6 weeks. Details of the Local Plan can be found at: https://breckland.govocal.com/en-GB and comments must be made in writing to: LocalPlan@breckland.gov.uk. New Government ruling which comes into force in the Autumn, means that District Councillors can no longer request that planning applications be brought to Committee. Cllr Bambridge was asked about the call for traveller sites and the requirement for sites across Breckland. He said that there are 3 or 4 sites within this Ward, but 40 or so sites are required across Breckland as a whole.

5. **Open Forum for Public Participation –** A resident asked whether the Parish Council had been informed of the road closures on Heath Road in advance. As these roadworks are being carried out by service providers, not NCC Highways, the usual prior notice rules do not apply. Physical signs had been placed on Heath Road several weeks ago informing road users of the closure. A comment was made about the recent Planning Application for a new TMA Bark site on Lyng Road. This application was from Breckland Planning Department, and as the proposal only applies to bark processing and storage, and not waste management, no application was needed from NCC. Details of the application are below, at item 8a). A resident asked if the grass triangle at the junction of the A47 and the Hockering slip road eastbound, could be cut as visibility was badly affected. NCC Highways will be contacted. Also, could the Parish Council consider erecting more benches around the village to help walkers. Possible sites will be investigated.

6. **To receive updates from:**
   a) **Village Hall** – Nothing to report, but bookings are good.
   b) **Village Church** – The new vicar, Kirsty Long, is fitting in well. Thanks were given to Cllr Higgins for all he does to maintain the churchyard. The PC were asked to remove the broken noticeboard at the entrance to the churchyard and were asked to help report the bad condition of the wooden fence on the corner of the churchyard. At present, it was thought that NCC Highways were responsible, but when improvement works are completed on the A47, the responsibility might be moved to National Highways.
   c) **Playground** – the RoSPA report on the condition of the playground has been received. The site remains closed for safety reasons and is kept locked. The RoSPA Report highlighted the bad condition of the surface and quotes will be sought to replace the ground with either bark or recycled rubber. It was also agreed the play equipment timbers be tested to see if they are beyond repair before a decision is made on whether to spend many thousands of pounds on this current site or remove all the equipment and seek a new site and install new play equipment The present site could possibly be

sold to adjoining tenants so that a new site and equipment could be purchased. The cost of new equipment will be extremely expensive and grants will have to be sought to move forward with such a project. A proposal was put forward by Cllr Bambridge, seconded by Cllr McIntee, that quotes be obtained for the compression testing of the timber and the cost of either bark or rubber ground cover, and the matter be discussed via email. All were in favour of this proposal. The full RoSPA Report is available on the Parish Council website on the Home Page under Play Area.

d) **Primary School/Friends of Hockering Primary School** – The fundraising aims for this year are continuing in order to support school trips and construct a new wooden pavilion in the school grounds. The next fundraiser is the Village Fete at the Village Hall on the 23rd August between 12 noon and 4.00pm. Once again there will be a fun dog show, traditional fete games, inflatables, stall holders and a BBQ and bar. Volunteers are urgently needed to help run the stalls and announce and run the raffle and auction. Some sponsorship has been received but more would be very welcome to cover costs. The PC will consider a grant application for the event in line with last year's grant of £500.

e) **Playing Field** – Cllr McIntee reported that the Hockering Football Club had done an excellent job in maintaining the grounds and clearing much of the brush-growth around the field. They had also cleaned out the Pavilion and held a tournament for the local division. He had received advice from Community Action Norfolk and a reply from the Charity Commission Revitalising team. He is waiting to have a telephone conversation with them in the next few days to obtain answers to various questions, such as the number of trustees required, before he arranges a further meeting with residents and interested parties who had expressed an interest in helping to form the new Hockering Playing Field Association. It was suggested that in the meantime, a meeting could be held to consider the actions that could be taken by the new HPFA once the Charity Commission gives the go ahead. This would include election of Trustees to the Committee, Trustees being appointed signatories for a new bank account and funding sought, so that improvements and renovations to the Pavilion can be planned. **Defibrillators -** It had been noted the defibrillator at the Pavilion had been broken into and the pads stolen. Councillors agreed that the defibrillators at the Playing Field and outside the Village Hall should be managed and monitored by the Parish Council and added to their Asset Register. Cllr McIntee will liaise with the Village Hall Caretaker to compare the machines and check common components. It was proposed that quotes be obtained for repairing the defibrillator at the Playing Field, or possible purchase of a new machine. All were in favour.

f) **Village Newsletter** – three volunteers have kindly come forward to relaunch Hockering Life. They have met with the printers and will publish the first edition at the end of July with plans for 4 editions a year. A new email address has been set up: hockeringlife@gmail.com so that news and dates of upcoming events can be reported. The Parish Council website will publish a link to the publication so that it can be downloaded by residents. The first edition has gone to print and residents should receive copies in the next couple of weeks. The editors are considering seeking advertisers for future editions to help cover printing costs and they are also looking at magazines produced by neighbouring villages to get ideas for the future.

g) **Community Speedwatch Group** –Three more sites had been submitted to the Police and approval has been received. The Chairman had obtained a quote for a new SAM2 machine which could be used at different locations in the village on a regular basis to remind drivers of the speed limit. The cost of this machine would be £3,366+VAT and an additional solar battery would cost £650. The possibility of obtaining grants to help with this cost would be investigated.

h) **Village Maintenance** – The possibility of holding a village clean-up day was discussed and a date will be arranged.

7. Correspondence for circulation – A resident had emailed with several queries, namely the delay in paying for replacement defibrillator pads for the Village Hall. He was assured that the banking protocol now included two councillors able to authorise payments, so future delays were unlikely. The Parish Council's Financial Regulations and Internet Banking Policy were explained and the dates for review were checked and updated on the Parish Council's website.

8. Planning Matters –

a) Planning Application PL/2026/0630/FMAJ. Proposed new bark processing and storage facilities. Land to east of Lyng Road, Hockering. This application was discussed by councillors at the last meeting and it was confirmed that a statement voicing the concerns of the Parish Council had been posted on the Breckland Planning website at the following link: https://publicportal.breckland.gov.uk/planning/index.html

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

9. Finance & Governance Matters

a) Payments for June listed below were approved by all, following a proposal by Cllr Bembridge, seconded by Cllr Neave.

MAY PAYMENTS FOR APPROVAL: ***THE CO-OPERATIVE BANK COMMUNITY ACCOUNT***				
BALANCE AS AT 09.06.26			**£23,848.35**	
PAY TYPE	**PAYEE**	**DESCRIPTION**	**ACTUAL AMOUNT**	**VAT**
BACS	M Ridgwell	Clerk Jun salary and allowances	311.00	
BACS	HMRC	PAYE, Period 03	73.40	
BACS	Glasdon	Additional dog bin fixings	28.97	4.83
BACS	Village Hall	Defib batteries, paid by P Hawker	33.49	5.58
BACS	Zurich Municipal	Annual Insurance Premium	599.73	64.25
		Total	**1,046.59**	**74.66**
BALANCE C/FWD 14.07.26			**£22,801.76**	

b) To receive the first quarter position statement – a copy was passed to councillors for their information. It was noted that the HMRC amount needed to be increased in next year's budget.

10. To receive any new items for the next agenda – To progress and receive updates on matters raised above, including the future of the play area, the playing field and management of the defibrillators.

11. To note date of the next Parish Council meeting – The next meeting will be on the 8th September 2026 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 9.35pm

Signed .....