

HOCKWOLD-CUM-WILTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held in the Village Hall, Main Street, Hockwold
on Tuesday 14th April 2026 at 7.30pm

Councillors of Hockwold cum Wilton Parish Council

Present: Cllr Royal, Cllr Newman, Cllr Sismey, Cllr Baker, Cllr Bland, Cllr T. Gossage
Hilary R Cox, Clerk
NCC & Borough Cllr Martin Storey
One members of the public

Open Forum

Members of Press and Public are invited at this time to voice their comments and concerns to the Parish Council.

- 1. To receive and approve apologies for absence.** Apologies submitted and approved from Cllr Rumsey and Cllr A. Gossage
- 2. To receive any declarations of interest from Members & consider requests for dispensation** Cllr Bland declared an interest in item 6. Cllr Sismey on item 15
Members are invited to declare disclosable pecuniary interests and other interests in items on the agenda as required by the Hockwold cum Wilton Parish Council Code of Conduct for Members and by the Localism Act 2011.
 - a. RAF Lakenheath**
 - U.S. forces recently participated as part of U.S. government efforts to support Norwegian and NATO total defense concepts in Exercise Cold Response. The exercise was a routine Norwegian-led winter military exercise in Northern Norway. The exercise was a significant milestone to demonstrate the readiness of a U.S.-based Marine Air Ground Task Force to swiftly composite and rapidly deploy across the Atlantic, be received by Norwegian forces, and conduct operations that enable larger NATO operations.
 - The 48 FW supported both Norfolk and Suffolk Justice Services last month with representation from both the 48th Security Forces Squadron and the Legal Office.
 - Representation from the 48th Medical Group attended the West Suffolk Council Civic Dinner on 6 March at West Suffolk College.
 - Representation from the 48th Mission Support Group attended the Suffolk County Council Civic Reception at Trinity Park in Ipswich on 24 March.
 - The RAF Air Defence Radar Museum visited the 48th Operational Support Squadron on 12 March.
 - Volunteers attended Feltwell Care Home on several visits this month to join and engage with the residents.
 - There will be a planned demonstration outside Gate 1 from 1-6 April. Base personnel are advised to use Gate 2 during this period, which will be open 24 hours until 2200 6 April. Gate 1 will be closed to all inbound and outbound traffic from 1200 to 1600 on Saturday, 4 April. Base personnel have been advised to plan travel accordingly and allow extra time for base entry/exit. There is an increased potential for traffic congestion on and around the installation during this time.
 - The 48 FW is aware of safety concerns raised regarding the plane spotters near the Wangford Road junction on the A1065. This is a matter for the local constabulary and the Wing is aware that policing has taken place in this area recently during peak times of activity. The 48 FW RAF Commander has previously engaged with Suffolk Highways on this issue whom are looking to place signage at the forest entrance where the majority of the parking takes place.

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- Chairs of local councils have been invited to the NATO BOWL at RAF Lakenheath on 15 May, alongside local football clubs.

b. Norfolk County Council & Borough WNKL Council, Cllr Martin Storey

Cllr Martin Storey provided an update on county and borough matters. He reported that elections are currently underway and noted recent developments in local government reorganisation. Members were advised that Government has confirmed a move towards a unitary authority model for Norfolk, with proposals indicating a multi-area structure and representation across defined regions. It was noted that elections for new unitary authorities are expected to take place in May 2027, with a mayoral election for the wider Norfolk and Suffolk area anticipated in 2028, subject to final arrangements. Cllr Storey advised that a significant proportion of England is already governed under unitary authority structures and expressed the view that the proposed model may provide stronger local representation and increased influence at a more local level.

Cllr Storey reported that further changes are being considered within planning governance, including proposals relating to the size and operation of planning committees, with ongoing discussions at borough level. He noted that these changes form part of wider national planning reform.

Members were updated that plans for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital redevelopment remain progressing. Cllr Storey also reported that the West Winch housing development, proposed at approximately 4,000 homes with an initial phase of around 1,100 properties, is currently paused following the withdrawal of a developer.

Cllr Storey commented positively on the condition of the village, noting that it is well maintained, and confirmed his participation in a recent community litter pick.

- c. Chairman** -Cllr Royal reported that sadly Cllr Denney has resigned from the council. Members noted that the council now has two vacancies. Cllr Royal also advised that there has been no update received from the Monitoring Officer regarding the matters previously raised.

d. Clerk The Clerk circulated the Action Point Log prior to the meeting. All questions were addressed. Members noted discrepancies in the Norfolk County Council Highways report, which recorded the loose and noisy manhole cover on Main Street and Nursery Lane, along with large potholes on Main Street and at the bottom of Nursery Lane, as completed. Members confirmed that these issues remain unresolved. The Clerk will contact Norfolk County Council Highways to seek clarification and request an update. Members noted the action.

3. To approve minutes of the Council meeting held 10th March 2026 It was resolved to approve the minutes as a true and accurate record.

4. Matters arising (for information only)

The Clerk updated the council on the previous action to seek alternative electricity supply quotations for the streetlighting. She advised that the lowest quotation received was 39.000 p/kWh for a day/night unit rate. Members noted that the current non-

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contract rates with the existing supplier are much lower at 27.990 p/kWh for the day rate and 22.330 p/kWh for the night rate.

To report progress on matters arising from previous minutes (not elsewhere on agenda)

5. To confirm receipt of NALC, CAN and other correspondence All Councillors present received their updates and correspondence.

6. To discuss derelict property on Peaces Close The clerk reported no update as she is waiting for a official statement from the council.

7. To discuss and adopt the new Grant application and policy The Clerk presented the new grants policy, application form and supporting checklist. She explained the need for a more robust and structured process in light of recent matters affecting the parish. Members reviewed the documents and agreed that the policy is comprehensive and necessary at this time. It was resolve unanimously to adopt the new policy, application and checklist.

8. To discuss vandalism in the parish The Clerk informed the council that graffiti remover had been purchased and used on the village gateway signs. The initial application had no effect, and a second attempt resulted in damage to the sign, removing the surface down to the metal. It was noted that the signs will require removal and repair. The council resolved to obtain quotations for repair or replacement, with the signs to retain the wording "Thank you for driving carefully." In the circles.

9. To discuss Village Hall Constitution Cllr Newman reported on the hard work of the Village Hall Committee over the previous year. She outlined the proposed new constitution, explaining its purpose and the need for its adoption, and confirmed that the existing conveyance remains in place. Members had received a copy of the constitution prior to the meeting and all questions were addressed. It was resolved to support the adoption of the new constitution unanimously, with the addition of *..and surrounding areas* on the introduction section. To read: Hockwold Village Hall is a registered charity and a vital community facility serving the residents, local groups and Primary School of Hockwold-cum-Wilton and surrounding areas.

10. To discuss the APA

Cllr Royal updated the council on arrangements for the Annual Parish Council Meeting and Annual Parish Meeting formerly known as Annual Parish Assembly. He confirmed that both meetings will take place on 12 May 2026, with the Official APM Parish Council Meeting commencing at 6:30pm and the Annual Parish Meeting to follow at 7:30pm. Cllr Royal advised that all three invited speakers have confirmed their attendance. Cllr Newman volunteered to organise the delivery of the newsletter/agenda this year. Cllr Royal confirmed that the invitation to parish groups, charities and businesses has been prepared and will be sent to the Clerk for distribution by email.

11. To follow up on the newsletter and organise delivery

The council discussed the future of the Parish Council newsletter. Members noted that, following the resignation of Cllr Denney and the time required for editing, production and delivery, maintaining a regular schedule presents a challenge for the council's current capacity. It was agreed that the Clerk will place this matter on the June agenda for full consideration, including whether continuing the newsletter as a quarterly publication remains viable.

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12. To discuss the maintenance of the village stone marker plaque on Main Street

The Clerk reported that an enquiry had been made to the Conservation Team at West Suffolk Council regarding the small plaque located on a wall on Main Street. Guidance was sought on its historic status, ownership, any required consents for repair or replacement, appropriate conservation methods, and the availability of grant funding. Members read the response from the Assistant Conservation Officer, which confirmed that the plaque is not within a Conservation Area, is not attached to a listed building or designated heritage asset, and that no records relating to it were identified. It was advised that no specific consents are likely to be required for repair or restoration, and that guidance should be sought from a qualified stonemason. It was also confirmed that no grant funding is currently available. The clerk reported that no responses to the Facebook request for information or pictures had been received. Cllr Newman to enquire with the homeowners and Cllr Royal to enquire with the former Headmistress of the local school.

13. To discuss the possibility of beautification project/event

The Clerk presented an overview of a proposed spring and summer programme focused on improving the appearance of the parish through small-scale planting, community activity, and ongoing maintenance. The report included a suggested calendar of events and a structure that can be built on in future years. It was noted that specific planting schemes and species selection will be brought forward separately and will be subject to further advice before approval. The council discussed the overall approach and agreed it is practical, achievable, and suitable for the parish. It was resolved unanimously to support the *Hockwold in Bloom* project and for the Clerk to proceed, with a regular item on agendas for the next few months to make decisions and get updates at council meetings. Cllr Newman offered volunteer support where able.

14. To discuss Norfolk Area Ramblers letter for Rights of Way and Footpaths in your Parish

The council considered correspondence from Norfolk Ramblers regarding the auditing and reporting of public rights of way and footpaths within the parish. It was noted that the proposal included the preparation of a documented audit of paths, recording condition of paths, to be made available to the public via parish council records, and the appointment of a councillor or warden to oversee this work. The council recognised that Norfolk Ramblers intend such information to support not only local residents but also walkers visiting from further afield, including overseas. The council also acknowledged that a mapped and recorded overview of footpaths could be beneficial to residents and visitors. However, members discussed the level of commitment and manpower required to undertake and maintain such an audit. It was highlighted that the maintenance of public rights of way is primarily the responsibility of Norfolk County Council and landowners, and that the parish council has limited capacity to take on additional initiatives. Priority is currently given to initiatives that directly benefit parishioners. Members therefore agreed that, while the proposal has merit, the council may not be in a position to commit to undertaking a full audit at this time. Cllr Baker enquired if there is a current map of pathways and footpaths. The clerk to investigate and send out to the members. Possible be put on a future agenda.

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15. To discuss request from Community Park for donation to a community event

Cllr Sismey informed the council that a meeting is scheduled with local groups and clubs to discuss a proposed *Hockwold Gala* event in September of this year. She explained that the event would provide an opportunity for local organisations to raise funds and may include activities such as petting animals, tractors and bouncy castles, with full details to be confirmed. The Community Park Committee has requested support from the council towards the cost of event insurance. As the exact cost is not yet known, it was proposed that funding be approved up to a set limit to allow planning to proceed. Cllr Baker proposed that up to £150 be allocated from the Community Events earmarked funds. It was resolved to approve funding up to £150 towards the event insurance. The Community Park Committee will provide proof of costs to the council in due course.

16. Planning Matters

a. To receive results & updates of outstanding applications

i. NONE26/00006/TPO Hockwold cum Wilton, E: 573043 N: 288015 2/TPO/00558:

The TPO'd tree in question has been identified incorrectly, it isn't a Judas Tree (Cercis), it is a Locust Tree (Robinia).T1, Robinia Height 15m, spread 6m, proposed work is to carry out a 15% Crown reduction bringing height to 12.75m and spread to 5.1m.- TPO Decision Consent-24 March 2026

Delegated Decision

ii. 26/00004/FLEXI Hockwold cum Wilton, E: 570159 N: 288493-PRIOR APPROVAL: Change of use of agricultural building to a flexible commercial use falling within Class B8 (Schedule 2, Part 3, Class R) Grange Farm,Hockwold cum Wilton

b. To receive new planning applications relevant to the village and make comment

i. 26/00508/F|Proposed barn style eco friendly SELF BUILD dwelling|The Orchard 20 Nursery Lane Hockwold cum Wilton THETFORD Norfolk IP26 4ND

The council considered the planning application and resolved to object on material planning grounds. Members raised concerns regarding the form of backland development, which does not reflect the established character of Nursery Lane. The scale, massing and elevated position of the proposed dwelling were considered visually intrusive and dominant. The council also stated concerns regarding the impact on neighbouring amenity, including potential overbearing effect, overshadowing and loss of outlook. In addition, members considered that the proposal would fail to preserve or enhance the setting of the adjacent conservation area. Members resolved to object on these grounds.

ii. 26/00496/F|Change of use from agricultural to equestrian use.|Land South of 25 South Street Hockwold cum Wilton Norfolk

The Parish Council considered the application and resolved not to support it. The Council does not object in principle to equestrian use. Concern relates to access, highway safety, and impact on the site. The South Street access appears to have been created prior to submission, despite the application stating no new access and no works commenced. This discrepancy requires investigation. The South Street access is located on a narrow section of road at or near a blind bend with limited visibility. The Council considers this access unsuitable and unsafe. Increased use, including horse boxes, would add risk. Pedestrian and horse use of this access also presents a safety concern due to vehicles approaching with restricted visibility. The existing Station Road

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access is established and has been used without issue. The Council considers this to be the appropriate access. The site includes a historic orchard with heritage apple trees which contributes to the rural character of the area. There is concern that the proposed use and access arrangements would result in disturbance and potential harm. The site is also in proximity to a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Insufficient information has been provided to demonstrate that the proposal would preserve its setting. For these reasons, the Parish Council does not support the application.

17. Finance

a. To agree payment of April's invoices

Accounts agree and approved.

Hockwold cum Wilton Parish Council

14 April 2026 (2026-2027)

PAYMENTS LIST

Vouche	Code	Date	Minute	Bank	Payment Ref.	Description	Supplier	VAT Type	Net	VAT	Total
1	Bus Shelter & Gateways	14/04/2026		Current Account		Bus Shelter and Gateways clea	1st Glass Window Cleaning	Z	25.00		25.00
7	Dog Waste Bins	14/04/2026		Current Account		Dog waste bins	Borough Council of Kings L	S	1,822.08	364.42	2,186.50
2	Staff Costs	14/04/2026		Current Account		Wages	Hilary Cox	X	1,295.68		1,295.68
3	Staff Costs	14/04/2026		Current Account		Employer National Insurance C	HMRC	X	264.30		264.30
4	Staff Costs	14/04/2026		Current Account		Employee Pension Contribution	NEST	X	64.61		64.61
6	Insurance	14/04/2026		Current Account		Insurance Policy Renewal	Zurich Municipal	Z	2,080.96		2,080.96
5	Lighting Maintenance	14/04/2026		Current Account		Street Lighting Maintenance	K & M Lighting Services	S	89.31	17.86	107.17
Total									5,641.94	382.28	6,024.22

18. Items for the next agenda

- Issues on the allotments and allotment contracts.

19. To confirm date and times of the next Annual Parish Council Meeting on 12th May 2026 starting at 6:30pm and the Annual Parish Meeting starting at 7.30 pm. Meetings take place in Hockwold Village Hall, Main Street IP264LW

Distribution:

One copy to each Councillor. Copies to Mr M Storey Norfolk Borough and County Councillor, Squadron Leader Eaton RAF Lakenheath and one copy for the website.