

HOCKWOLD-CUM-WILTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held in the Village Hall, Main Street, Hockwold
on Tuesday 8th September 2026 at 7.30pm

Councillors of Hockwold cum Wilton Parish Council

Present: Cllr Royal, Cllr Newman, Cllr Sismey, Cllr Baker, Cllr T. Gossage, Cllr Rumsey, Cllr A. Gossage

Hilary R Cox, Clerk

County Councillor Sue Prigg

Borough Councillor Martin Storey

Three members of the public

Open Forum

Sue Annear spoke on behalf of St James Church to the Council regarding the RAF's request for information about representatives from the local bases attending community services. She advised that she would welcome RAF representation at the services, but that the arrival of new clergy and associated scheduling arrangements had made planning difficult. She would report back to the Council once the service times had been confirmed.

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

71. To receive and approve apologies for absence. NONE

72. To receive any declarations of interest from Members & consider requests for dispensation Cllr Sismey declared an interest in item 85.b

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.

73. Reports

a. RAF Lakenheath

- The USVF are continuing a joint campaign with Suffolk Police to educate newly arrived personnel on UK driving standards. This involves inter alia stop and check operations within the Base perimeter to encourage Airmen to rectify faults prior to formal prosecution if subsequently stopped on the public highway.
- The poor mobile phone coverage and capacity in the Tri-Base is having a detrimental impact on routine Base operations. 48 FW are in discussion with the Pride in Place team to investigate the installation of mobile phone repeaters.
- On 6 Aug, members of the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps at RAF Lakenheath were invited to a visit at the East Anglian Air Ambulance centre in Norfolk.
- On 15 Aug the Wing supported the VJ Day Service in Bury St. Edmunds whereby A1C Howard attended and laid a wreath.
- On 15 Aug the Deputy Wing Commander Col Jurewicz attended the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo Salute Takers evening as invited and hosted by the Air Officer Scotland and the Chief of the Air Staff. On 28 August, Brig Gen Alfaro also attended this event.
- On 22 Aug, airmen from the tri-wings continued their support to the Leeway Project helping to repair another safe house in Norwich.
- A new initiative to strengthen links with local business and civic leaders was held at RAF Mildenhall on 20 Aug. The RAF Lakenheath RAF Commander and Community Relations Adviser joined the Key Leaders event, which saw a small selection of local civic leaders alongside organizational leaders from the local communities for networking and a tour of the base.
- Colonel Alfaro is officially promoted to Brigadier General 31 August.
- We are looking forward to hosting the annual civic leaders tour on 2 Sep. A final email has now been issued to all confirmed attendees.

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b. Norfolk County Council Cllr Sue Prigg

Cllr Prigg reported that she had attempted to assist with the Council's ongoing British Gas billing complaint. British Gas would not discuss the account with her as she was not an authorised account holder. She advised that she intended to raise a formal complaint with British Gas herself regarding the matter. Cllr Prigg updated members on Local Government Reorganisation in Norfolk. She reported that the judicial review due to be heard on 10 September would no longer proceed following the Government's withdrawal of its decision on Norfolk's reorganisation. The May 2027 local elections would now proceed under the existing arrangements. Cllr Prigg advised that Norfolk County Council intended to seek compensation from Government for costs incurred, which she indicated could be in the region of £1.5 million, although the final amount had not been established. Turning to Station Road, Cllr Prigg reported that NCC Highways had confirmed it would not fund the feasibility study required in connection with the proposed speed reduction. She expressed concern regarding the lack of communication from Highways and the resulting confusion over what was intended for Station Road. Cllr Prigg advised that the previous councillor funding route was no longer available and that she was discussing alternative options with other County Councillors to explore how parish councils might be assisted with the cost of feasibility studies. She would report back when further information was available.

c. Borough WNKL Council, Cllr Martin Storey Cllr Storey advised that the consultation on the Borough Council's new Local Plan had commenced at the beginning of September. The consultation was seeking local views and included opportunities to take part online and through face-to-face events. Cllr Storey referred to costs associated with local regeneration work and advised that it was hoped that some of the expenditure would be recovered. He also provided an update on the ongoing situation concerning the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and advised that he would continue to keep the Parish Council informed as further information became available.

d. Chairman Cllr Royal advised that he would be attending a Chairs' Networking Meeting later in the month and intended to make other Chairs aware of the Council's recent experience with British Gas and the issues that had arisen. He also confirmed that he had completed the required pension re-declaration in respect of the Clerk.

e. Clerk

The Clerk reported that a further report concerning the ongoing British Gas billing issues had been distributed to members and provided an update on the current position. She advised that three quotations had also been obtained from alternative electricity suppliers for consideration by the Council. At the request of Cllr Prigg, the Clerk had provided her with a list of the outstanding highways issues within the parish. A copy of the outstanding issues, together with a request for an update, had also been sent to NCC Highways. Archive boxes had been ordered to begin the process of sorting and archiving historic Council files currently held in the filing cabinets. The Clerk advised that the Council would also need to have its official minute books bound and deposited with the Norfolk Record Office in Norwich. A cost for this work was not yet available. The Clerk provided members with an update on the Government's withdrawal of the Local Government Reorganisation decisions for

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Norfolk and Suffolk and explained the current position and its implications for local councils. The Clerk also advised that the second and final instalment of the Council's annual precept had not yet been received.

- 74. To approve minutes of the Council meeting held 21st July 2026** It was resolved to approve the minutes as a true and accurate record.

75. Matters arising (for information only)

The further report on the British Gas billing issues was discussed. The Clerk provided an update on the continuing complaint, the outstanding billing and audit-trail concerns and the additional work still required to reconcile the account. The Clerk advised that three quotations had been obtained from alternative electricity suppliers and presented these to members for consideration. The quotations were discussed, as well as, the potential financial savings, budget certainty and security that could be provided by entering into a multi-year fixed contract. Members agreed that the saving and certainty offered by a fixed-term contract should be considered when determining the Council's future electricity supplier. It was agreed that the appointment of a new electricity supplier would be on the October meeting agenda for resolution.

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

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

- 77. To discuss Flag of the Fens request** The Council considered the request to endorse the Flag of the Fens initiative and the information provided in support of the campaign. It was resolved to support and endorse the Flag of the Fens initiative. The Clerk was instructed to advise the campaign organisers of the Council's decision.

- 78. To hear update on vandalism of the village gateways and possible resolutions** The Chairman provided an update on Hockwold Hall's offer to produce covers for the vandalised village gateways. He advised that Hockwold Hall was currently in a particularly busy period and had not yet been able to progress the work. Cllr Royal would liaise with Hockwold Hall and report back to the Council. Cllr A Gossage offered to make a further attempt to remove the paint from the vandalised gateways.

- 79. To hear updates on the village stone marker plaque on Main Street** The investigation into the history of the village stone marker has reached a standstill. Cllr Baker advised that he may have some historical documents or publications that could provide further information and agreed to look into these. The Clerk was also asked to check whether any relevant information was readily available during her next visit to the Norfolk Record Office.

80. To discuss allotments, including new contracts

The Clerk distributed two drafts of the proposed new allotment contract to members. One version used the term "Notice to Quit" and the other "Notice to Vacate". The Clerk also provided supporting information on the terminology and the reasons for recommending the use of "Notice to Quit". Two versions had been provided to allow the new contracts to be progressed without delay. It was resolved to approve the draft allotment contract using the term "Notice to Quit".

Cllr Baker and the Clerk reported that they had inspected the allotments. Most plots were found to be in good use and well maintained. A small number of plots were identified as requiring maintenance, and notices would be sent to the relevant

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allotment holders. The Clerk advised that three plots were currently unoccupied and were at various stages of being cleared, having been left in very poor condition by previous allotment holders. One current plot holder had voluntarily given many hours over the year to assist with clearing and maintaining the allotment site. Cllr Gossage had also assisted by removing a significant number of tyres left on an abandoned plot. The Council noted and appreciated the work undertaken. Following the maintenance notices, Cllr Baker and the Clerk would reinspect the relevant plots after 30 days. If further action was considered necessary, proposals would be brought back to the Council for consideration.

- 81. To discuss Remembrance and possible representative from RAF Lakenheath** As discussed during the open forum. The council would appreciate a representative attend the Remembrance Service, but will need to wait to get details of time from Sue Annear.
- 82. To discuss ongoing parking issues along Main Street.** Cllr Rumsey raised concerns regarding dangerous and irresponsible parking along Main Street and other main routes through the village. Particular concern was raised about parked vehicles preventing large agricultural machinery, including combine harvesters, from using their usual routes through the village. It was noted that residents associated with the visiting forces had previously been asked to be mindful of the needs of the local farming community and the access required for agricultural vehicles. It was reported that parking problems had continued despite this request.
Members also discussed the continuing parking issues around the school and the potential dangers caused to pupils and families.
- 83. To discuss ongoing Highways issues.**
 - a. Station Road Speed Limit** The Parish Council has been pursuing a reduction of the 40mph speed limit on Station Road for several years. Following an earlier site meeting, there was support for the view that the existing 40mph limit was inappropriate for the road. NCC Highways has since advised that a feasibility study is required before the proposal can progress and has confirmed that it will not fund this work. Cllr Prigg is currently exploring with other County Councillors whether alternative funding options may be available to assist parish councils with the cost of such studies and will report back.
 - b. Trees causing damage along Station Road** The overgrown trees and vegetation along Station Road have been reported as creating a hazard for vehicles using the road. The work is scheduled to be undertaken in the autumn, once the seasonal bird-nesting restrictions have passed.
 - c. Seam in Station Road potentially dangerous.** This has now been repaired
 - d. Sign on Station Road still broken and wires hanging** Clerk had had no further updates.
 - e. Visibility on crossroads of Blackdyke and Station Road** The overgrown trees and vegetation on Station Road near the Blackdyke crossroads have been reported as causing a visibility hazard for vehicles entering Station Road. The necessary cutback work is scheduled for the autumn, once the seasonal bird-nesting restrictions have passed.
 - f. Signage for pedestrians and horses on Church Lane and SLOW on surface** Clerk wrote to NCC Highways and has had to response.

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84. Planning Matters

a. To receive results & updates of outstanding applications

- i. **26/00898/F HOUSEHOLDER: demolition of existing single storey rear extension and construction of a single storey extension | Newhaven 11 Nursery Lane Hockwold cum Wilton Thetford Norfolk IP26 4ND-Application Permitted NOTED**
- ii. **26/01256/F | HOUSEHOLDER: New side entrance, wall that abuts the highway, new pitched roof over existing first floor flat roof, new render to existing walls, demolition of existing barn and garage and construction of news store/workshop and new 'Juliet' balcony to south elevation | East Lode 69 Nursery Lane Hockwold cum Wilton Thetford Norfolk IP26 4ND NO COMMENT FROM COUNCIL**

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

- i. **NONE**

85. Finance

a. To agree payment of August's invoices

Hockwold cum Wilton Parish Council PAYMENTS LIST

11 August 2026 (2026-2027)

Vouche	Code	Date	Minute	Bank	Payment Ref.	Description	Supplier	VAT Type	Net	VAT	Total
35	Electricity Supply	11/08/2026		Current Account		Electricity Supply	British Gas	L	266.85	13.34	280.19
36	Bus Shelter & Gateways	11/08/2026		Current Account		Bus Shelter and Gateways clea	1st Glass Window Cleaning	Z	25.00		25.00
37	Staff Costs	11/08/2026		Current Account		Wages	Hilary Cox	Z	1,295.48		1,295.48
38	Staff Costs	11/08/2026		Current Account		Employer National Insurance C	HMRC	Z	264.50		264.50
39	Staff Costs	11/08/2026		Current Account		Employee Pension Contribution	NEST	Z	64.61		64.61
40	Broadband & Phone	11/08/2026		Current Account		Office phone and internet	Hilary Cox	Z	26.00		26.00
41	Fees & Subscriptions	11/08/2026		Current Account		Annual Subscription	Norfolk Association of Loca	S	96.00	19.20	115.20
42	Fees & Subscriptions	11/08/2026		Current Account		Annual Subscription	Norfolk Association of Loca	Z	295.74		295.74
43	Office Costs	11/08/2026		Current Account		Office Supplies	Viking Office UK Limited	S	46.34	9.27	55.61
44	Fees & Subscriptions	11/08/2026		Current Account		Annual Subscription	Parish Online	S	385.00	77.00	462.00
45	Lighting Maintenance	11/08/2026		Current Account		Street Lighting Maintenance	K & M Lighting Services	S	93.80	18.76	112.56
Total									2,859.32	137.57	2,996.89

Accounts agree and approved.

b. To agree payment of September's invoices

Hockwold cum Wilton Parish Council PAYMENTS LIST

07 September 2026 (2026-2027)

Vouche	Code	Date	Minute	Bank	Payment Ref.	Description	Supplier	VAT Type	Net	VAT	Total
46	Staff Costs	08/09/2026		Current Account		Wages	Hilary Cox	Z	1,459.12		1,459.12
47	Staff Costs	08/09/2026		Current Account		Employer National Insurance C	HMRC	Z	367.81		367.81
48	Staff Costs	08/09/2026		Current Account		Employee Pension Contribution	NEST	Z	81.45		81.45
49	Lighting Maintenance	08/09/2026		Current Account		Street Lighting Maintenance	K & M Lighting Services	S	93.80	18.76	112.56
50	Defibrillator	08/09/2026		Current Account		Reimbursement for Defib suppl	David Sismey	Z	158.40		158.40
51	Broadband & Phone	08/09/2026		Current Account		Office phone and internet	Hilary Cox	Z	26.00		26.00
52	Electricity Supply	08/09/2026		Current Account		Electricity Supply	British Gas	L	322.98	16.14	339.12
53	Office Costs	08/09/2026		Current Account		Office Supplies	Viking Office UK Limited	S	131.67	26.34	158.01
Total									2,641.23	61.24	2,702.47

Accounts agree and approved.

86. Staffing and Governance

- i **To consider excluding members of the public and press under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, relating to staffing and individual employee matters.**
The Council resolved to exclude the public and press under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 because of the confidential nature of the staffing and individual employee matters being considered.

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- ii **To consider and approve the recommendation of the Human Resources Advisory Committee regarding the implementation of the National Salary Award 2026/27.**
The Human Resources Advisory Committee's recommendation regarding the implementation of the National Salary Award 2026/27 was considered. The Council resolved to approve the recommendation and implement the National Salary Award 2026/27.

87. Items for the next agenda

- To discuss working group to look at cost for clerk home office/business office for Parish Council.
- Remembrance wreaths
- Hockwold Village Hall Accounts Audit
- Speed Watch

- 88. To confirm date and times of the next Parish Council Meeting on 13th October 2026 starting at 7.30 pm. Meetings take place in Hockwold Village Hall, Main Street IP264LW**

Distribution:

One copy to each Councillor. Copies to Sue Prigg Norfolk County Councillor, Martin Storey Borough of West Norfolk, Squadron Leader Eaton RAF Lakenheath and one copy for the website.