

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL (FIRST) PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 4th MAY 2025 AT 5.15PM AT HARGRAVE VILLAGE HALL

In Attendance: Cllr R Bird Cllr M Pilkington
Cllr F Halton Cllr S Ratledge
Cllr R Jones Members of the Public: 0
Cllr C Nicholls (Chair for the mtg)

Cllr Nicholls opened the meeting as Chair and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR FOR 2025-26.

Nominations for Chair had been sought and Cllr Ratledge has proposed Cllr Sackett as Chairperson for 2025-26, this was seconded by Cllr Halton.

Vote: Fore 6
Against 0
Abstains 0

RESOLVED 25/001 – that Cllr Sackett be elected as Chairperson for period 2025-26.

Cllr Sackett signed her acceptance of office outside the meeting.

Nominations for Vice-Chair had been sought and Cllr Sackett has proposed Cllr Nicholls and Cllr Ratledge as Vice-Chair's for 2025-26, this was seconded by Cllr Jones.

Vote: Fore 6
Against 0
Abstains 0

RESOLVED 25/002 – that Cllr Nicholls and Cllr Ratledge be elected as Vice-Chair's for period 2025-26.

Cllr Nicholls and Cllr Ratledge signed their acceptance of office.

APOLOGIES: Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Sackett due to ill health and Cllr M Jones (Ward Councillor) due to family commitments.

Cllr Nicholls reported that the Chairperson had received the resignation of Cllr Roscoe since the last meeting, following that the Notice of Vacancy had been advertised and no election had been called, therefore The Parish Council could proceed to fill the vacancy through co-option.

DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE INTERESTS - None were received.

PUBLIC SESSION – Nothing raised.

MINUTES

RESOLVED 25/003 that the Chairperson signs, as a true and correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd March 2025 proposed by Cllr Ratledge and seconded by Cllr Halton.

ACTIONS

Actions not otherwise on the agenda that had been completed:-

- The Parish Council raised with the PROW officer the stile by the Glamping Site and other stiles requiring attention that they were aware of along the Eddisbury Way.
- Clerk continued to liaise with the Empty Homes Department of CWaC.

Actions not otherwise on the agenda still outstanding:-

- Cllr Nicholls has the plaque available to fix and will make arrangements now that the Beacon has been relocated.
- Clerk to arrange a meeting with the Highways Engineer, MP, Ward Councillor, Headmistress, Estates Manager for CDAT & PCSO.
- Clerk to explore the installation of a cowl on the SID to reduce the flashing light being reflected into the houses.

BUSINESS AND CORRESPONDENCE

Public Right of Ways – a written report of the meeting on the 13th March with the Public Rights of Way Officer of CWaC was circulated around the meeting.

It was reported that following this the landowners of Elm Tree Farm had confirmed that they would be willing to allow a kissing gate to be installed on their verge to replace the stile and also the landowner of the field opposite Huxley Primary School had agreed to have a 2 in 1 field gate installed.

The Clerk sought confirmation from the Parish Council that they would pay the installation costs for these should the landowner be unable, CWaC Contractor had quoted £440 +VAT but the Clerk had sought a quote from a local company. The Parish Council RESOLVED 25/004 to fund the installation of the Kissing gate and 2 in 1 Gate.

Cllr Pilkington reported that she had written to the tenant with regards to replacing the stiles with kissing gates on the footpath from Gates Heath to Hatton Nook farm but received no response back.

ACTION: Ask PROW to see if they would write to landowners.

Tree down across path near the mill in Hargrave – MP to send picture.

Cllr R Jones asked about the maintenance of the footpath on Huxley Lane and asked that this be included in future agendas for discussion and monitoring. The Clerk confirmed she had received a quote to weed killer the footpath and gutter on Huxley Lane and the company had recommended that this be undertaken three times a year. The Parish Council RESOLVED 25/005 to proceed with the first weed killer and request that this be undertaken in May and review at the next meeting as to when the next weed killer should be sprayed.

Community Litter Picking – it was reported that the Community Litter Picking Event in conjunction with Happy Days for Hargrave and Huxley had been undertaken on Saturday 8th March, and was well attended, it was agreed to progress with the next event later in the year in the same way, in conjunction with Happy Days.

Highways – It was reported the Clerk had a recent meeting with CWaC Highways Engineer and reported to the meeting the actions following this meeting.

Assets – Cllr Martin and Cllr Pilkington were requested to undertake a review of the assets currently on the Parish Council Asset Register and provide an update of any annual maintenance required to be undertaken and provide this report to the next Parish Council meeting.



Empty Homes Update – It was reported that the Empty Homes Officer at CWaC had, as of yet, received no contact from the owner of the Old Post Office, Hargrave.

Speeding in Huxley – Cllr Ratledge provided a report that the SID had been relocated in April to opposite the inn at Huxley. He had downloaded the monitoring information and noted that the majority of vehicles were travelling at or below 40mph, there were approximately 13 % doing over this speed.

According to the data approximately 35,000 vehicles had travelled along Huxley Lane since 14th February which was considerably lower than expected. Cllr Ratledge recommended that the SID be left at this site for another few months to monitor this further.

ACTION: Cllr Ratledge to provide positive report for including in Down our Way.

Towpath Project- Tattenhall Parish Council had contacted the Parish Council with regards to improving the accessibility of the Towpath from Waverton to Beeston. Tattenhall Parish Council sought confirmation if the Parish Council was prepared to contribute towards the feasibility study. It was proposed by Cllr Ratledge and seconded by Cllr Bird and unanimously RESOLVED 25/006 that the Parish Council contribute £500 towards the feasibility study.

Other Correspondence

Cheshire West Town and Parish Conference – Wednesday 16th July from 5.15pm to 8.30pm Macdonald Portal Hotel, Tarporley, CW6 0DJ – Attendees for this event were sought.

CWaC Town and Parish Connections Online Meeting: Planning - 22nd May 2025 6pm to 7pm – Cllr R Jones and Cllr L Sackett to attend.

Mid-Cheshire Footpath Subscription for 2025-26 – Cllr Ratledge proposed, Cllr Halton seconded and it was unanimously RESOLVED 25/007 ok to pay the £8 membership.

PLANNING

The Planning Register dated 23/04/2025 was accepted and changes to the planning register from last meeting were noted.

It was noted that the following consultation had been undertaken since the last meeting:-

- 25/00142/FUL – Greenlooms Farm, Martins Lane, Hargrave, Chester CH3 7RX – Conversion of barns to three dwellings - *the Parish Council noted that this application is for 3 x four bedroom conversions which is bigger than the previous application that was withdrawn. There is no mention about the public right of way that presently runs through the farm and how this will be managed. The Parish Council note that the redevelopment of the barns is in line with the neighbourhood plan, and the elevations appear to be relatively unchanged. The Planning statement makes no reference to the neighbourhood plan and the Parish Council asks that consideration be given to the materials used and ensure that they are in-line with the neighbourhood plan. The Parish Council also asked that a provision be made for the barn-owl habitants within the planning application.*
- 25/00859/FUL – Long Acre, Mill Lane, Huxley, Chester CH3 7RQ – Demolition of the existing rear extension and car port, and erection of single storey rear extension and front porch – *the Parish Council had no objection to this application.*

It was reported that the Parish Council had reported the following Planning Enforcement issues:-

- EN-692347622 – Willow Farm, Hargrave – Additional Dwelling and Hardstanding installed without planning permission – Planning Enforcement has confirmed they are not able to take this forward due to the timescale of when these changes were made.

- EN70041835 – Green Farm, Huxley Lane, Huxley – New pipework has been laid from the land at the back of Green Far that is being fed into the ditch on the roadside which will then go into the River Gowy.

The following Planning Enforcement updates were received:-

- EN633593315 – End of Old Hall Lane, Hargrave – CWaC had served a Planning Contravention Notice to gather further information. This information is now with the Planning Enforcement Team to consider their next steps. It is likely that an enforcement notice will be issued.

Proposal to build 115 Houses in Tattenhall – following a public meeting that Tattenhall Parish Council arranged the Chairman of Hargrave and Huxley Parish Council attended and the Tattenhall Parish Council consultation response was circulated.

Cllr Bird left the meeting.

AUDIT & AGAR

The Clerk provided the meeting with information regarding to the finances for 2024-25.

- Summary of 2024-25 – This was circulated to all Parish Councillors for information.
- Certificate of Exemption – RESOLVED 25/008 – that the Council sign the Certificate of Exemption certifying that during the financial year 2024-25, the higher of the authority's total gross income for the year or the total gross annual expenditure, for the year did not exceed £25,000.
- Internal Audit Report - the Council noted the report dated 03/04/2025 from the Internal Auditor.
- Governance Statement RESOLVED 25/009– That the council agree to all points on the Governance Statement Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 24-25.
- Accounting Statement RESOLVED 25/010 – That the council agree the accounting statement of the AGAR 24-25.
- Notice of Public Rights and Publication of Unaudited Annual Governance & Accountability Return - the council agreed to publish the notice of Public Rights commencing 3rd June and ending 14th July 2025
- ACTION: Submit Certificate of Exemption to PKF LittleJohn.

ACTION: Post Audit Papers & Summary Report on website.

ACTION: Publish Public Rights on Website and Noticeboards for the period 3rd June to 14th July 2025.

FINANCIAL ITEMS

Cashbook and Out-turn Forecast YTD

RESOLVED 25/011 Year to date cashbook and out-turn report dated 24/04/2025 was approved as a true and correct record.

Payments approved to be made in between meetings - RESOLVED 25/012 – to accept that the clerk could make payments, in between meetings, throughout the year in-line with budget for the following budgeted items:-

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Clerk's Salary, Expenses & Training | Defibrillator Costs |
| Payroll | Footpath Improvements (Stiles/Kissing Gates) |
| Internal Audit | Community Clean-up |
| Admin/Website Costs | Street Furniture Maintenance |
| Room Hire | Bulb Planting |
| CHALC Membership | Maintenance of Kerbline and footpath in Huxley |
| SLCC Membership | British Legion – Poppy Wreaths |
| Data Protection | Ad Hoc Beneficial Items |
| Other Membership | Refund Churchyard Grant Monies |

Internal Audit Report

The Council reviewed the comments provided by the Internal Auditor and agreed the following actions:

1. Item 49. VAT on a paper purchase was not included - 62p re Costco. In view of small amount just ignore it, but please note for the future – *the clerk noted*.
2. PKF Invoice (Item 24). The VAT of £42 was not accounted for. Do not amend the Spreadsheet, but please add on to current VAT Reclaim File – *the clerk had updated accordingly*.
3. I recommend that the VAT Return is submitted as at 31 March annually. This enables you to check the rebate being against the Cash Book Spreadsheet total – *the Clerk noted*.
4. Please ensure that payments made in March 2025 are approved and Minuted in May 2025 – *the Clerk had included these within the payments for approval later in the meeting*.
5. Fixed Asset Register (FAR). I note that the AGAR (p6, line 9) shows a reduction in FA values of £1,317. The Register itself suggests that the difference is £1,094 (2 items deleted) - *the Clerk had updated accordingly*.
6. As a follow on to point 5, you may need to amend Line 9 on the Variances Spreadsheet - *the Clerk had updated accordingly*.
7. The Risk Assessment Document can be amended to show that it was reviewed at the March 2025 PC Meeting - *the Clerk had updated accordingly*.
8. I note that you agreed a way forward as to your Insurance Cover renewal at the 3/25 Meeting. No doubt Cover Levels were checked - I suggest that this should be minuted – *the Clerk noted for future*.
9. Income and Expenditure totals on your Internal Out-turn Statement do not equal actuals - *the Clerk had updated accordingly*.
10. Can I suggest that you review the built in formulae on your Cash Book Spreadsheet. The difference between Income and Expenditure for the year was £2,760.28. *the Clerk had updated accordingly*.
11. I recommend that you switch the Clerk's e-mail address to a hargravehuxleypc address. More secure and looks more professional – *the Clerk undertook to look into this and report to a future meeting*.

Bank Reconciliation against Cashbook YTD – RESOLVED 25/013 – that Cllr Pilkington signed the Bank Reconciliation and Bank Statements.

Payments for approval:-

RESOLVED 25/014 to accept the income and payments list above since the last meeting for approval.

Income received since the last meeting for approval

| Date | Payable to | Gross Amount | Comment |
|------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|------------------------|
| 10/03/2005 | Bank Interest | £20.55 | Monthly Bank Interest |
| 09/04/2025 | Bank Interest | £22.04 | Monthly Bank Interest |
| 10/03/2025 | HMRC VTR | £797.46 | VAT Rebate |
| 04/04/2025 | HMRC VTR | £115.00 | VAT Rebate |
| 27/03/2025 | Cheshire West and Chester Council | £995.43 | Churchyard Grant |
| 07/04/2025 | Cheshire West and Chester Council | £6,360.00 | Annual Precept Payment |

Payments made since the last meeting for approval

| Date | Payable to | Net Amount | VAT | Gross Amount | Comment |
|------------|---------------------|------------|---------|--------------|------------------------------|
| 11/03/2025 | Broxton Barn Owls | £100.00 | £0.00 | £100.00 | Donation - Broxton Barn Owls |
| 11/03/2025 | Huxley Village Hall | £110.00 | £0.00 | £110.00 | Room Hire for Year |
| 11/03/2025 | P J Hellmers Ltd | £275.00 | £115.00 | £390.00 | Maintenance of Footpath |
| 18/03/2025 | Service Charge | £4.25 | £0.00 | £4.25 | Bank Charges |
| 18/04/2025 | Service Charge | £4.25 | £0.00 | £4.25 | Bank Charges |

| | | | | | |
|------------|------------------------------|---------|-------|---------|--------------------------|
| 24/03/2025 | Zurich Town & Parish Council | £304.00 | £0.00 | £304.00 | Annual Insurance Payment |
| 25/04/2025 | Mrs T Ryall-Harvey | £347.01 | £0.00 | £347.01 | Salary Tax Month 1 |

Payments not yet made for approval

| Payable to | Net Amount | VAT | Gross Amount | Comment |
|---------------------------------------|------------|--------|--------------|--------------------------------------|
| Mrs T Ryall-Harvey | £347.01 | £0.00 | £347.01 | Salary Tax Month 2 |
| Mid-Cheshire Footpath Society | £8.00 | £0.00 | £8.00 | Annual Subscription |
| Cheshire Association of Local Council | £161.07 | £0.00 | £161.07 | Affiliation Fees for 2025-26 |
| St Peter's Church, Hargrave | £995.43 | £0.00 | £995.43 | Churchyard Maintenance Grant |
| Phil Sanders | £57.00 | £0.00 | £57.00 | Internal Audit |
| Carolyn Nicholls | £32.59 | £0.00 | £32.59 | Refreshments for Litterpicking Event |
| Mrs T Ryall-Harvey | £111.70 | £15.96 | £127.66 | Expenses |

PARISH COUNCIL MATTERS

Policy Schedule Review

Following the circulation of the policy schedule it was RESOLVED 25/015 to accept all policies as listed and review again in May 2026 subject to the following policies/procedures which were noted that updated versions were available. It was therefore agreed to circulate the amended versions around the Parish Council in between meetings and confirm at the next meeting their approval:-

- Staff Absence Policy
- Disciplinary Procedures
- Grievance Procedures
- Standing Orders

ACTION: Clerk to circulate amended Policies/Procedures around the Parish Councillors for review.

Schedule of Meetings for 2025-26

RESOLVED 25/016 that the Parish Council meetings be agreed as follows for the next 12 months:-

Sunday 6th July at Huxley Village Hall
 Sunday 7th September at Hargrave Village Hall
 Sunday 2nd November at Huxley Village Hall
 Sunday 4th January 2026 at Hargrave Village Hall

Sunday 1st March 2026 at Huxley Village Hall & Parish Meeting
 Sunday 26th April 2026 at Hargrave Village Hall – Annual Meeting

The Parish Council considered the time of the meetings following a request for the meetings to be scheduled at 4.00pm and it was agreed that the meetings should take place at 5pm for 2025-26.

Roles and Responsibilities

RESOLVED 25/017 that the following responsibilities would be lead by:-

- Planning Matters – Lead Parish Councillor for two month period:-
 May & June Cllr Bird
 July & August Cllr Halton and Cllr Pilkington
 September & October Cllr Sackett and Cllr Martin
 November & December Cllr Nicholls & Cllr R Jones
 January & February Cllr Ratledge & Cllr Sackett
 March & April Cllr Bird
- Down our Way (monthly contributions to the newsletter) – Cllr Nicholls
- Moulson Trust Committee – Cllr R Jones

- Online signatories – Cllr Halton, Cllr Sackett
- Assets – to review and report back any maintenance requirements – Cllr Martin and Cllr Pilkington
- Footpaths – Cllr Pilkington
- Noticeboard (installation of Agendas and updated information) – Cllr Ratledge and Cllr Sackett
- Highways - Cllr Ratledge, Cllr Pilkington & Cllr Bird.
- SID Rota 2025-26
 - May/June – Carolyn Nicholls
 - July/August – Fiona Halton
 - September/October – Steve Martin
 - November/December – Steve Ratledge
 - January/February – Lorraine Sackett
 - March/April – Richard Jones
- SID Data Analysis – Cllr S Ratledge.

Annual Report 2024-25

RESOLVED 25/014 to adopt the Parish Council's Annual Report for 2024-25.

ACTION: - Publish on Website

DOWN OUR WAY – items for inclusion in the next issues of Down Our Way was sought.

- Co-option
- SID Data
- Pot-hole Reporting
- Date of next Parish Council Meeting.

It was noted that the deadline for include items in the next edition of Down our Way was 15th May 2025.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be the Parish Council Meeting and will take place on Sunday 6th July 2025 at 5.00pm in Huxley Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 18:31

Signed:.....

Dated: 6.7.2025.....