

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL (FIRST) PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 10th MAY 2026 AT 7.00PM AT HARGRAVE VILLAGE HALL

In Attendance: Cllr R Bird

Cllr F Halton

Cllr M Pilkington

Cllr S Ratledge

Cllr L Sackett

Cllr S Martin

Cllr C Nicholls (Chairman)

Clerk: Mrs T Ryall-Harvey

Members of the Public: 0

Cllr Sackett opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR FOR 2026-27.

Nominations for Chairman had been sought and Cllr Sackett proposed Cllr C Nicholls as Chairman for 2026-27, this was seconded by Cllr S Ratledge.

Vote:	Fore	5
	Against	0
	Abstains	0

RESOLVED 26/001 – that Cllr Nicholls be elected as Chairman for period 2026-27.

Cllr L Sackett thanked the Parish Councillors for all their support over the last two years during her time as Chairman and hoped that the Parish Councillors will offer the same support to Cllr Nicholls. Cllr Sackett thanked Mrs Ryall-Harvey for all her help and advice during this period also.

Cllr Nicholls signed her acceptance of office.

Cllr Nicholls thanked Cllr Sackett for the work she had done whilst she was Chair of the Parish Council.

Nominations for Vice-Chair had been sought and Cllr Nicholls proposed Cllr Sackett as Vice-Chair's for 2026-27, this was seconded by Cllr S Ratledge

Vote:	Fore	5
	Against	0
	Abstains	0

RESOLVED 26/002 – that Cllr Sackett be elected as Vice-Chair's for period 2026-27.

Cllr Sackett signed her acceptance of office.

APOLOGIES: Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr R Jones, Cllr C Warburton and Cllr M Pilkington due to prior engagements and Cllr Mike Jones (Ward Councillor) due to family commitments.

DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE INTERESTS – Nothing declared

PUBLIC SESSION – nothing raised.

MINUTES

RESOLVED 26/003 that the Chairman signs, as a true and correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on 1st March 2026 proposed by Cllr Ratledge and seconded by Cllr Sackett and unanimously agreed.

ACTIONS FROM MINUTES (*not otherwise on the agenda*)

- Quotes had been obtained for the planting of Snowdrops, Wild Garlic and Daffodils as well as Wildflower seeds. It had been agreed that wildflower seeds should be purchased for the areas on the grass verge that has recently been disturbed by United Utilities.
A resident kindly donated wildflower seeds for planting on the verges and Cllrs Pilkington and Sackett scattered the seeds in the parishes of Huxley and Hargrave on 28th March. The Parish Council thanked the resident kindly for this donation.
- Clerk had ordered litter picking equipment for the scheduled Womble Walk.
- Clerk had submitted a ward members budget money application towards the purchase of a bench for the Memorial Garden in Hargrave.
- Clerk had checked that there was a Neighbourhood Plan Page on the website and identified that even though the page was there, there was no link – this has now been resolved.
- Clerk confirmed that she had raised the issue of the anti-spam settings for emails with the website provider, unfortunately there was no option for this at this time.
- It was reported to the meeting that the Clerk had received an initial quote for a Design Code of £7,950 + VAT, the Parish Council noted this at this time and undertook to wait until there was grant money available until they decided if they wished to create a Design Code and also at a time when CWaC has completed their own design code.

BUSINESS AND CORRESPONDENCE

Public Right of Ways – It was reported that Cllr Ratledge had recently undertaken a walk from Huxley Primary School along FP14 and below were his findings that had been reported to the Public Right of Way Officer (PROW) at Cheshire West and Chester Council.

1. The stile at ///glare.slack.slamming is solid but very high to climb over.
2. It leads into field of grass/crops that is waist high and very difficult to walk through (no footpath visible at all) ///lurching.reverses.clap (photo attached)
3. The stile at ///vipers.homeward.sweetener is passable but very overgrown. It's easier to step over the horse jump to the side of the stile! (photo attached)
4. The next field down to brock holes is planted with crops but with no footpath visible, again the crops are a couple of feet high. It was easier to follow the tractor tyre marks. ///cycle.megawatt.stow
5. The stile to Brockholes is almost non existent ///bypasses.economics.urban but easy to step over.
6. Walk through Brockholes the footpath is in very poor shape and overgrown.

The PROW officer is aware of the problems on this footpath (Eddisbury Way) last September when she accompanied Cllr Sackett, There are a number of issues which requires liaison with the Rivers and Canal Trust and also landowners.

It was reported to the meeting that there remained outstanding issues on FP3 in Hargrave, at the junction to Huxley via Withy Cottage. The PROW officer had confirmed that they would fund the repair of this bridge and replace the stiles with kissing gates.

It was also reported that the PROW walked the circular walk with new kissing gates funded by The Northern Peaks and Footpath Society and noted that the bridge on FP5 over the pond was in need of a bit of work, as one of the planks on the bridge is rotten and needs replacing. The PROW has also requested that the high bar on one side of the bridge be removed, to make the whole route more accessible. When this bridge is replaced,

she intends to request gates be installed on the ends instead of the current set up, subject to the landowner's agreement.

Highways

Highways had confirmed that United Utilities has accepted liability of the road cracking along Huxley Lane and once all work is completed United Utilities will come back to repair the cracks.

Resurfacing of Church Lane, it was reported that unfortunately as United Utilities are still working on this road the resurfacing has been delayed until the Summer. The Highways Engineer has asked for all defects to continue to be reported and CWaC will deal with them according to their code of practice, and he hopes they will be in a position to undertake the resurfacing of Church Lane in the Summer.

Hedge on Long Lane, it was confirmed that the Highways Engineer has not had time to progress this, although he was aware that the hedge was no-longer overhanging the road. The Highways Engineer undertook to progress this further and speak to the residents.

The blocked gully opposite Brook Cottages on Hoofield Lane had been reported and that this system generally is in good condition and functioning from the top of Hoofield lane with the exception of the location at Brook Cottages and CWaC will look to undertake further repair/investigation work in 2026-27.

Standing Water on junction of Guy Lane and Martins Lane – Colas are looking to cleanse the gullies along Guy Lane and Martin's Lane junction within the next couple of weeks.

Speeding in Huxley - nothing to report currently.

United Utilities – It was reported to the meeting that the United Utilities work had been extended and reported to residents to be finishing around 22nd May. The Parish Councillors raised concern about traffic management on the two-way traffic lights situated at the 'T' Junction of Huxley Lane/Hoofield Lane/Church Lane

ACTION: Cllr Sackett undertook to raise this with United Utilities.

Community Litter Picking Event (Womble Walk) it was reported that the recent Community Litter Picking Event that took place on 21st March had been well attended, in particular in Hargrave and a number of bags of rubbish had been collected and since removed by CWaC. It was suggested that sign cleaning could be undertaken at the same time in the spring and bulb planting in Autumn. It was agreed that the date for the next Womble Walk would be agreed at a future meeting of September.

Asset Maintenance – deferred to the next meeting.

ACTION: Cllr Pilkington to chase the painter with regards quoting for the Telephone Box.

Maintenance – Confirmation was sought regarding the work that was required to take place in the Millennium Garden for this half year. Cllr Sackett reported that the garden required weeding towards the end of May and undertook to arrange this with Mr O'Brien. He will be also asked to quote for the weed spraying on the pavement on Huxley Lane.

ACTION: Arrange for contact with Mr O'Brien

It was reported that the clerk had received confirmation that CWaC funding had been secured for the replacement bench in the Millennium Gardens.

ACTION: Clerk to purchase bench.

Other Correspondence – nothing raised.

PLANNING

The Planning Register dated 01/05/2026 was accepted and changes to the planning register from last meeting were noted.

It was noted that the following application had been determined by the Local Authority since the last meeting:-

- 24/03261/FUL – Land at Guy Lane, Foulk Stapleford, Chester – Change of use of land for dog walking/training, hardstanding for parking with turning area and new access – **approved**.
- 26/00006/FUL – Scots Pines, Church Lane, Hargrave, Chester CH3 7RN – Alterations to front include bow windows and storm porch, demolition of existing conservatory and erection of single storey rear extension, replacement windows and doors – **approved**.

It was noted that the following application had been taken to appeal -

- 26/00352/FUL - Willow Farm Long Lane Huxley Chester CH3 7RG - Conversion and change of use of existing building into two dwellings including the construction of a car port and associated development.

AUDIT & AGAR

The Clerk provided the meeting with information regarding to the finances for 2025-26.

- Summary of 2025-26 – This was circulated to all Parish Councillors for information.
- Certificate of Exemption – **RESOLVED 26/004** – that the Council sign the Certificate of Exemption certifying that during the financial year 2025-26, 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 09/04/2025 from the Internal Auditor.
- Governance Statement **RESOLVED 26/005**– That the council agree to all points on the Governance Statement Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025-26.
- Accounting Statement **RESOLVED 26/006** – That the council agree the accounting statement of the AGAR 2025-26.
- 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 2026.

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 2026.

FINANCIAL ITEMS

Cashbook and Out-turn Forecast YTD

RESOLVED 26/007 Year to date cashbook and out-turn report dated 20/04/2026 was approved as a true and correct record.

Payments approved to be made in between meetings - **RESOLVED 26/008** – 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

Payroll

Internal Audit

Admin/Website Costs

Room Hire

CHALC Membership

SLCC Membership

Data Protection

Other Membership

Defibrillator Costs

Footpath Improvements (Stiles/Kissing Gates)

Community Clean-up

Street Furniture Maintenance

Bulb Planting

Maintenance of Kerblin and footpath in Huxley

British Legion – Poppy Wreaths

Ad Hoc Beneficial Items

Refund Churchyard Grant Monies

Purchase of Lamp-post Poppies – it was proposed by Cllr Sackett that a further 18 lamp-post poppies be ordered to be distributed in Huxley, Hargrave and Foulk Stapleford this was seconded by Cllr Nicholls and unanimously **RESOLVED 26/009.**

Internal Audit Report

The Council reviewed the comments provided by the Internal Auditor and noted that the Internal Auditor confirmed that the recommendations of previous auditor have been carried out satisfactorily.

The council operates a good system of internal control and governance and they were satisfied that the accounts and systems used comply with the standards expected of the Council.

Councillors commented on the Internal Auditors comments about no Contract being available for her to review and agreed that in future a redacted contract be provided.

Payments for approval:-

RESOLVED 26/010 to accept list below of income received and payments made or due to be made since the last meeting for approval.

Income received since the last meeting for approval

Date	Payable to	Gross Amount	Comment
06/03/2026	HMRC VTR	£824.80	VAT Rebate
09/03/2026	Bank Interest	£9.12	Monthly Bank Interest
09/04/2026	Bank Interest	£10.10	Monthly Bank Interest
07/04/2026	HMRC VTR	£330.00	VAT Rebate
08/05/2026	Cheshire West and Chester Council	£451.00	Members Grant
13/04/2026	Cheshire West and Chester Council	£6,500.00	Annual Precept Payment

Payments made since the last meeting for approval

Date	Payable to	Net Amount	VAT	Gross Amount	Comment
20/04/2026	Mrs K Lloyd	£60.00	£0.00	£60.00	Internal Auditor
17/03/2026	Service Charge	£4.25	£0.00	£4.25	Bank Charges
17/04/2026	Service Charge	£4.25	£0.00	£4.25	Bank Charges
20/04/2026	CHALC	£165.20	£0.00	£165.20	Affiliation Fees for 2026-27
24/03/2026	PJ Hellmers Ltd	£1,650.00	£330.00	£1,980.00	Installation of Kissing Gates
29/04/2026	HMRC PAYE	£185.64	£0.00	£185.64	PAYE Payment Tax Month 1
25/04/2026	Mrs T Ryall-Harvey	£567.46	£0.00	£567.46	Salary Tax Month 1

Payments not yet made for approval

Payments	Net Amount	VAT	Gross Amount	Comment
Mrs T Ryall-Harvey	£429.84	£0.00	£429.84	Salary Tax Month 2
Service Charge	£4.25	£0.00	£4.25	Bank Charges
Mid-Cheshire Footpath Society	£8.00	£0.00	£8.00	Subscription for 2026-27
Hargrave and Huxley Happy Days	£300.00	£0.00	£300.00	Grant contribution toward the provision of first aid training.

Friends of Huxley School	£500.00	£0.00	£500.00	Grant Contribution towards the creation of a school allotment garden.
Hargrave Parochial Church Council	£420.00	£0.00	£420.00	Grant contribution towards Wifi provision for Church and Village Hall.
Mrs T Ryall-Harvey	£40.70	£0.00	£40.70	Expenses

PARISH COUNCIL MATTERS

Policy Schedule Review

Following the circulation of the policy schedule it was **RESOLVED 26/011** to accept all policies as listed and review again in May 2027.40.70

ACTION: Clerk to review the Planning Standing Orders

It was **RESOLVED 26/012** to accept the following policies as circulated prior to the Parish Council meeting:-

- Bio-diversity Policy
- Community Engagement Policy
- Co-option Policy and Procedures
- Equality and Diversity Policy

Schedule of Meetings for 2026-27

RESOLVED 26/013 that the Parish Council meetings be agreed as follows for the next 12 months:-

Sunday 5th July at Huxley Village Hall

Sunday 6th September at Hargrave Village Hall

Sunday 1st November at Huxley Village Hall

Sunday 10th January 2027 at Hargrave Village Hall

Sunday 7th March 2027 at Huxley Village Hall & Parish Meeting

Sunday 16th May 2027 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 2026-27.

Roles and Responsibilities

RESOLVED 26/014 that the following responsibilities would be lead by:-

- Planning Matters – All Councillors
- 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, Cllr Pilkington and Cllr C Warburton
- Highways - Cllr Ratledge, Cllr Pilkington & Cllr Bird.
- SID Rota 2026-27
 - 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 2025-26

RESOLVED 26/015 to adopt the Parish Council's Annual Report for 2025-26.

ACTION: - Publish on Website

Working Group Meetings

Hargrave and Huxley Parish Council Grant Giving Working Group – it was reported that three applications had been received :-

- Hargrave and Huxley Happy Days for £300 towards the provision of First Aid Training to members of Happy Days.
- Friends of Huxley School for £500 towards the creation of a school allotment garden.
- Hargrave Parochial Church Council for £420 towards the provision of wifi broadband facilities for the church and hall for 12 months.

It was recommended by the Working Group that all three projects be award funding and photographic evidence be requested of these projects so that the Parish Council could use them to promote that Parish Council's Grant process in 'Down our Way'.

It was unanimously **RESOLVED 26/016** that the Parish Council would support these three grant applications as per the above amounts.

CIL Working Group – nothing further to update since the last meeting.

ACTION: Schedule next meeting.

Neighbourhood Plan Working Group - No further updates since last meeting.

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

- Next Parish Council meeting.
- Circular Footpaths.
- 5 mile – road closure reminder.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place on Sunday 5th July 2026 at Huxley Village Hall at 5.00pm.

Signed:..........

The meeting closed at 18:09
Dated:.....05/07/26.....