HEPWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING
HEPWORTH PAVILION
THURSDAY 21 MAY 2026
7.45pm

PRESENT:
Councillor Garry Bloomfield (GB) (Chair)
Councillor Nick Bennett (NB)
Councillor Marjorie MacPherson (MM)
Councillor Perry Penn (PP)
Councillor Louise Robinson (LR)
Councillor Hollie Williams (HW)

IN ATTENDANCE:
Andy Osman (Parish Clerk) (AO)
County Cllr Harry Richardson (HR)
District Cllr Carol Bull (CB)
2 members of the public

26/38 ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

LR proposed that GB continue as Chair. MM seconded the motion which was carried unanimously. HW proposed that NB continue as Vice Chair. LR seconded the motion which was carried unanimously.

26/39 APOLOGIES

None.

26/40 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

26/41 PUBLIC FORUM

Birch Tree Farm. An update was sought on the ongoing planning enforcement activity. CB confirmed that an appeal against the West Suffolk Council enforcement notice for unauthorised development had been allowed by the Planning Inspector.

26/42 REPORTS FROM AND QUESTIONS TO BOTH DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS

a. County Cllr Update. HR introduced himself as the new County Councillor and provided the following update:

- **Local Government Review**. The new administration of Suffolk County Council had submitted a judicial review of the decision to create 3 unitary authorities in 2028.

- **Locality Funding.** A locality grant of £1000 was agreed to support the purchase of a 2nd SID.

County Cllr Harry Richardson left the meeting at 8pm.

b. District Cllr Update. CB updated the following:

- Locality Funding. A locality grant of £1000 was agreed to support the purchase of a 2nd SID.

- Clarkes Sign. Discussions were still taking place to see if a more appropriate sign could be agreed.

- Blacksmiths Cottage. CB was still working with enforcement to resolve this issue.

- Parish Elections. The District Council elections due in 2027 had been postponed due to LGR. The Parish Council elections that were due alongside the District Council elections would now take place in May 2028 alongside elections for the new unitary authorities.

26/43 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on 16 April 2026 had been previously circulated and i**t was resolved that these were an accurate record of the meetings.**

26/44 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

- Minute 26/29: 16 April 2026 – New Bus Shelter. The Clerk reported that the response from Suffolk County Council, which had been previously circulated, indicated that the shelter would now be installed in August.

- Minute 26/32: 16 April 2026 – Recycling M-SIDs. It was **agreed that HW would attempt to sell the M-SIDs** when replaced by the new Elan City SIDs.

- Purchase of 2nd SID. The meeting agreed to purchase the 2nd Elan City SID once the new posts were installed and locality funding confirmed. **The Clerk was to action**.

26/45 RISK ASSESSMENT

The risk assessment, previously circulated, was considered. It was **resolved to approve this assessment**.

26/46 FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

a. Finance Report. The meeting noted the finance report (current account balance £10,023.33, savings account balance £4,000.00 and the projected outturn at the end of the FY of approx. £3,000 current account and £4,000 savings account). The following payments were authorised:

Pavilion Hire	£72.00

Suffolk County Council	£630.00 (SID Post)
SALC Membership	£284.10
Malcolm Saunders (audit)	£100.00

LR agreed to authorise the payments.

b. New IT Policy. The meeting agreed to a new IT Policy that had been pre-circulated.

District Cllr Carol Bull left the meeting at 8.15pm.

c. Asset Register. The meeting noted the contents of the Asset Register which had been previously circulated. It was **agreed to adjust the purchase dates of grit bins purchased in 2020.**

d. Audit Report. The meeting noted the contents of the previously circulated audit report which raised no observations.

e. Governance Report. The meeting approved the previously circulated Annual Governance Report covered by Section 1 of the Hepworth Parish Council Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/26. The meeting also confirmed that the Parish Council was exempt from a limited assurance review as its gross expenditure for 2025/26 did not exceed £25,000. **It was resolved that the Clerk was to return the signed Certificate of Exemption**.

f. End of Year Accounts. The previously circulated Accounting Statements covered by Section 2 of the Hepworth Parish Council Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/26 were approved.

g. Donations. **It was resolved to make the following donations:**

£250 to the Parochial Church Council of Hepworth for the churchyard.
£200 to support the Hepworth Herald magazine.
£150 to SARS.
£25 to the Royal British legion.

LR agreed to authorise the payments.

26/47 PLANNING MATTERS

a. DC/26/0677/EIASCR - Request for Screening Opinion under Regulation 6 (1) of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2017 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. Land At Shepherds Grove Industrial Estate East Sumner Road Hepworth. The meeting discussed a draft response by NB which had been pre-circulated. It was agreed to submit a slightly modified response that included 3 areas identified during discussion. **NB agreed to make the changes and pass to the Clerk for submission**.

26/48 HIGHWAYS MATTERS

- Hedge – Junction at The Street/A143. The Chair agreed to report the overgrown hedge at the junction of The Street/A143 on the Highways Reporting Tool.

26/49 CORRESPONDENCE

None

26/50 QUESTIONS TO THE CHAIRMAN

- Bus Use. LR highlighted that a small survey on bus use had been included in the next edition of The Herald.

- Pavillion Lease. NB highlighted that key officer roles within the management committee were unfilled ie Secretary and Treasurer. It was noted the lease for the Hepworth recreation ground had two break points: in 2029 provided 6 months' notice given and if the Hepworth Recreation Ground Charity closed. The meeting agreed to monitor the situation and to form an informal working group to explore implications if the situation was perceived to be going to change formally.

26/51 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next Parish Council meeting will be on Thursday 18 June 2026 at 7.30 pm.

26/52 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was resolved to exclude the press and public under Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 to allow shortlisting of applicants for the Parish Clerk vacancy.

The meeting closed at 8.40pm.



Andy Osman
Parish Clerk
28 May 2026