

**HAWSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
AT THE VILLAGE HALL  
on THURSDAY 11<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2025 at 7.30pm.**

**Present:** P Cllrs H Brewis (Chair), J Lomas-Farley, J Bulbrook, R Alexander (in part), J West, A Brewis & C Carr; C Hibbert - clerk; SC Cllr Soons (in part). One member of the public  
**Apologies:** P Cllr RA (late); Tree warden.

*The meeting started at 7.30pm.*

**1. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES AND CONSIDER ANY APPLICATIONS FOR APPROVAL OF ABSENCE: NOTED and ACCEPTED.**

**2. PUBLIC FORUM**

**2.1 Public participation.** No comments.

**2.2 County Council** SC Cllr KS report was received and **NOTED**; a copy will be uploaded onto the website. Discussion followed about local government reorganisation with particular focus on financial impacts/benefits and uncertainties about the figures presented. KS is still awaiting confirmation of the availability of SCC funding to support the purchase of an SID for the village. KS expressed some reservations as to the benefits to be achieved under The Quiet Lanes scheme.

**2.3 West Suffolk Council.** See item 2.2 above. The meeting asked SC Cllr to chase up the WSC enforcement team for confirmation as to whether they would be taking enforcement action on Woodlands.

*RA joined the meeting 7.50pm.*

The meeting heard that SCC officer MF (community engineer) has visited the village and is investigating the viability/cost of new road markings at Larkfield Corner to reduce speeds on this dangerous bend. KS was put on notice that there may be a request for locality funding if this initiative is able to go ahead.

*KS left the meeting at 7.55pm.*

**2.4 Police** The current Suffolk Constabulary report can be found at <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/asset-library/councillor-assets/Suffolk-PCP-Annual-Report-2024-2025.pdf> It was **NOTED** that one of the incidents reported was a disturbance between individuals in Whepstead Road.

**3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

**3.1 To receive disclosures of personal and prejudicial interests from Councillors on matters to be considered at the meeting.** JW declared an interest in item 10.2 (expenses claim); JFL declared an interest in item 9.2 to the extent that his wife has privately submitted comments on the relevant planning application.

**3.2 To consider any applications for dispensations in relation to declared pecuniary interests:** no dispensation applications were received.

**4. MINUTES FROM THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING DATED 10<sup>th</sup> JULY 2025.**

The minutes from the Parish Council meeting dated 10<sup>th</sup> July 2025 were **APPROVED** and signed as a true and accurate record of this meeting. (Thanks to LB who took minutes in absence of clerk).

**5. MATTERS ARISING**

The meeting heard that; (i) as no one has expressed an interest in the footpath leaflet suggestion, this initiative will not be taken forward at the current time; (ii) The You Tube Channel is operative providing a platform for PC meeting recordings; links will be provided on the Hawstead PC website; (iii) Speed camera signage has been installed on village gates; SCC subsequently confirmed in writing that it would not approve this installation as there is no speed camera in the village; however SCC officer MF has verbally confirmed since then that there are no objections to signage as the SCC ANPR is in the village from time to time on rotation it is appropriate to have speed camera signage in place. The meeting generally endorsed the retention of the speed

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camera signage; (iv) the defibrillators in the village have been registered on The Circuit (a national database of available defibrillators which coordinates with The Ambulance Service); (v) the damaged plaque for the crab apple tree has been replaced, thanks to JW. The meeting noted disappointment that WSC was unwilling to accept responsibility for the damage which appeared to have been caused by its grass cutting contractors.

## 6. REPORTS

**To receive reports including the following:-**

**6.1 Communications;** the meeting heard that the various communication systems were working well; (i) the Youtube channel is now live; a new means of recording meetings is under trial; (ii) the WhatsApp group is working well; (iii) Hawstead is included in the City Fibre upgrade programme; the timing and impact of works on the verges will need to be kept under review; fibre should be available a few months after works to install infrastructure have been completed.

**6.2 Highways and safety;** the meeting heard that; (i) the new speed watch scheme is in operation with weekly sessions lead by 12 volunteers; the police have agreed to include an alternative Speedwatch location in Whepstead Road; the number of sessions is likely to be reduced over the winter in poor weather; (ii) the condition of the verges should be reviewed once Anglian Water has completed its works.

**6.3 Volunteering;** the meeting heard that plans are afoot to renovate the memorial bench and do some further work at Brook Green in consultation with the tree/river/greens warden – more volunteers would be welcome; JW reported that since the last meeting he has (i) attended an SCC highways “self help” session; (ii) met with the SCC community engineer twice; (iii) trimmed the willow near the village hall back (iv) cut the village hall grass; (v) visited Tuddenham PC village hall to review the EV charging point with HB; (vi) installed new speed camera signage; and (vii) purchased a new memorial plaque for the crab apple tree. Thanks were noted to JW for all his work.

**6.4 Clerk.** The clerk report was received and **NOTED**.

## 7. CONSERVATION

**7.1 Greens;** the meeting heard that the DEFRA announcement about the availability of the SFI scheme is still awaited and this will inform future grant funding opportunities. Discussion followed about the installation of new signage on the village green to deter vehicles. It was **AGREED** that HB would undertake some research and present a proposal to the next meeting.

**7.2 Footpaths (inc footpath rep);** a report was received from the footpaths rep, for which thanks; whilst footpaths were largely in good order, joy riding on the village green/ vehicles driving over green following events at the village hall were reported. The meeting heard that the footpath sign at market path is on the ground. Clerk to report.

**7.3 River proposals – update on grant funding.** The meeting received and **NOTED** the river warden report, a copy of which is attached. Whilst one large grant had been refused, grant funding has been secured to commission a plan to outline a nature based solution to slow the flood water as it passes through the village; a company called Aquamaintain will be commissioned to develop a plan which they will then present to the public in a series of consultation meetings. No decision as to implementation of the plan will be made until after there has been an opportunity for public consultation.

**7.4 Tree work:** A quote for cutting the weeping willow near the village hall back is still awaited.

## 8. TO CONSIDER

**8.1 Purchase of Speed Indicator Device** The meeting **AGREED** to purchase 1 x Speed Indicator Device (ElanCity £2589.99+VAT plus up to £250 for new poles/pole extenders); some preliminary advice as to locations has been sought from SCC officers but a formal application for pole approval/risk assessment is required; the need to consult with nearby residences was noted. It was **AGREED** to secure the location for the poles before placing the order and also to pursue SC Cllr KS for grant support.

**8.2 The provision of a charging point for the village hall (subject to further consideration/research);** the meeting heard that JW and HB had visited the charging point at Tuddenham PC village hall – their report is attached. The meeting discussed; (i) the minimal financial return experienced by Tuddenham PC; (ii) the no-overnight parking restriction on

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Hawstead Village hall car park; (iii) the standard length of time for charging; (iv) minimal interest from HCC. It was **AGREED** not to pursue this initiative further for the time being.

**8.3 Coordination with other councils to promote local anti-speeding initiatives.** The meeting discussed the Moulton PC initiative to lobby SCC for changes to certain local highway policy to tackle speeding issues in rural areas. The meeting discussed the positive rapport which the Council was trying to build with the SCC community highway engineer. It was **AGREED** to express general support/ interest in the Moulton PC initiative but to decline to actively participate for the time being, with efforts being directed to fostering positive relationships with SCC highways.

#### **8.4 Insurance renewal**

Insurance quotes were received from Clear Council/ Ecclesiastical (£531.48) and Zurich (£280). It was **AGREED** to proceed with Zurich subject to updating the asset register (to remove the old speed gun and add in the new SID) which it was noted may impact on to the proposed premium. [Post meeting note – revised quote to include SID is £303 – Zurich].

**8.5 Removal of tree in the brook.** The Council having previously agreed to remove the fallen tree from the brook was asked to revisit this item as the river warden wanted to retain the tree in situ to create a natural pool beneath which would slow river water. Discussion followed about; (i) impact of erosion on the landowner access if the tree were left in situ; (ii) benefits to river flow by leaving the fallen tree in the river; (iii) the importance for any communications with contractors etc to be undertaken via the clerk rather than through individual councillors. It was by majority (6:1) **AGREED** that the tree should be removed from the brook as originally agreed and the clerk should instruct the contractor accordingly.

**8.6 Proposal to provide memorial bench** A proposal to install a memorial bench on the village green in memory of two long standing residents was approved in principle subject to it being a robust, hardwood bench of suitable quality and design. The Council **NOTED** it would become responsible for any onward maintenance.

**8.7 Suggestion to create a village design statement for Hawstead from resident** The Council considered a request from a local resident to consider commissioning a village design statement which could be used as a reference point for assessing the suitability of new development in the village. It was **NOTED** that the decision maker for planning applications is West Suffolk Council; the heritage officers input where a proposal is likely to impact on the setting of any listed buildings; there is no particular vernacular style in the village. As such it was **AGREED** that this would not be an initiative to take forward at the current time, given local circumstances and the resource required to put such a document together.

**8.8 Quiet Lane update.** It was **AGREED** that the Council (in conjunction with Great Whelnetham PC) would pursue a Quiet Lanes application for Bells Lane.

### **9. PLANNING APPLICATIONS, APPEALS AND NOTIFICATIONS**

**9.1 Planning notifications;** The following notification has been received:-Appeal against refusal of planning permission for one self build dwelling (means of access to be considered) at Pipers Hall Farm, Whepstead Road, Hawstead, Suffolk AP/25/0026/STAND; Consultation window closed 4 Sept 2025.

**9.2 Planning application - a. change of use of sales and storage areas to three holiday lets including first floor side extension b. single storey rear infill extension c. replacement of existing side extension Metcalf Arms Lawshall Road Hawstead Suffolk IP29 5NR** The meeting discussed; (i) whether there was any demand for further holiday lets in the village given that there are already around 16-18 existing holiday lets in a village of approx 120 homes; (ii) the change of use from retail/hospitality to housing in this rural location where there are very few services; (iii) the proposed parking arrangements including whether there is enough room for four cars in the location as shown, or whether any parking would be better accommodated elsewhere within the wider site; (iv) safety of access for cars entering onto the adjoining road from the proposed parking spaces; (v) noise impacts from the proposals. The Council resolved **UNANIMOUSLY to OBJECT** to the proposal on grounds that; (a) the change of use from retail to hospitality would limit the already minimal range of services in this rural location; (b) there is no established need for further holiday accommodation in the village; (c) there is inadequate space to

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provide the four car parking spaces in the proposed location; (d) there are concerns about vehicular safety for vehicles driving onto the adjoining road from the proposed parking provision.

**10. FINANCE**

**10.1 To receive and approve the bi-monthly financial summary for July-August 2025;** the bi-monthly report was received and **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED**.

**10.2 To approve payments to be made;** the following payments were **APPROVED**.

	Payee	Detail	Net	VAT	Gross
1	CH website refund	Online	66.00	13.20	79.20
2	JW Refund of Arco	Online	94.73		94.73
3	SALC training	Online	36.00	7.20	43.20
4	JW Refund of tree plaque	Online	45.00		45.00
5	Open Space Society sub	Online	45.00		45.00
6	CH wage	Online	890.40		890.40
7	HMRC	online	222.60		222.60
8	Lloyds charges	DD	4.25		4.25
9	Lloyds charges	DD	4.25		4.25
10	CH exps	online	52.00		52.00
11	ICO	DD – already PAID	52.00		52.00

Approval of a grant of £150 to Macmillan Cancer (annual coffee morning) was also **APPROVED** subject to a grant application being received.

**10.3 To acknowledge and accept National Pay Award 25 26;** The meeting **NOTED** the National Pay Award 25/26 and **APPROVED** the consequent increase to the clerk’s pay as per her contract of employment.

**10.4 To consider retention of outdated speed gun.** It was **NOTED** that the out of date speed gun is surplus to requirements; the police do not endorse its use for the current Speedwatch scheme and there is no ready market for it on Ebay. Accordingly it was **AGREED** to remove it from the register of assets and dispose of it.

**11. CORRESPONDENCE** The following correspondence was received and **NOTED**:-

11.1 Playground reports;

11.2 Town and Parish Forum info

**12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2025 at 7.30pm.**

*The meeting closed at 9.30pm.*

Distribution  
 All Cllrs/Website/Noticeboard

Documents before meeting  
 Clerk report  
 Bimonthly summary  
 River Report

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**Attachment 7.3 River warden's report, September 2025**

This summer's drought meant that most of the Hawstead headwaters were dry for 2-3 months except for a succession of small pools in some shady areas. These pools are immensely valuable to invertebrates and even small fish as a refuge in such dry conditions. They occur when natural processes in the river at times of high flow, carve out depressions in the bed - such as on the outside of the meander near the footbridge and in a succession of hidden places where the stream is impeded by fallen trees.

The major exception to this dry state, however, has been the Hawstead Tributary between Pinford End and Larkfield corner. Immediately downstream of Pinford End there is a constant flow of treated water from the Sewage Treatment Works. But remarkably, this flow gets stronger as it progresses downstream until the first foot bridge where throughout the summer it was possible to hear water trickling from a ditch. We're currently investigating springs in the village and I presume this is one of them – there is a full pond up the hill from that point, near the site of an old Hall.

As part of the preparations for the Lark Flagship chalkstream restoration project, we now have both a Seneye continuous monitoring sensor, and a sediment tube installed near Larkfield corner. The sensor is recording levels of dissolved oxygen and free Ammonia, among other things, while the tube is collecting silt from the river for analysis at the University of Southampton. There will be reports coming from both projects later in the year. There are ten sediment tubes in total across the catchment, and there will be 16 sensors.

As part of the preparation for the Lark Flagship river restoration project, I've taken several groups of visitors on tours of our streams. These people include: Steve Lane from The Rivers Trust; Rob Clapham, the Environment Agency Coordinator for Great Ouse Rivers; and Professor William Sutherland, University of Cambridge Department of Ecology; as well as the Anglian Water river restoration team for this area. All these people were frankly amazed to see the Hawstead Tributary, Hawstead Brook, and the reach upstream of Great War Huts in such a remarkably natural state, morphologically at least, with beautiful meanders, and protected by belts of woodland; 'a very special place' was the general consensus.

These people were also unanimous that the large fallen tree should be left where it is. Over the last year, it has been interesting to observe the interaction between the tree and the water. The tree has had the effect of diverting the energy of the flow downwards into the bed, scouring out quite a deep pond underneath the trunk which has remained full of life amidst the drought. Where the tree is lying on the opposite bank there is now a healthy sprouting of new growth from the coppiced branches. The tree is almost certainly rooting itself from its branches, which should have the effect of protecting the bank from erosion. Rob Clapham wrote to me afterwards saying:

My general advice is that woody material should be retained in the channel wherever possible, as it is an important component of functional river processes and helps to form and sustain habitats. This is particularly evident in this section of

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river.

However, if the landowner wishes to remove the tree, for land management purposes, they may do so, but must take precautions not to harm wildlife in the process. It has been mentioned that there is an access track near the eroding bank that is at risk because of the tree. I cannot predict whether removing the tree will reduce the erosion of this bank or increase it - there are too many other factors to consider when making that assessment.

The Anglian Water team separately observed that the brick bridge downstream is in a poor state, and could easily get washed away in a high flow. They suggested that the fallen tree is usefully slowing the flow, and therefore protecting the bridge from collapse. Their prediction is that over time the large meander along the cliff where the kingfisher nests will get cut off from the river to form an oxbow lake. It is this process of gradual change that makes the whole area so enchanting.

RLCP has recently received, via the EA, a 'donation' of £10,000 which is specifically earmarked for the Hawstead project identified last year. This means that we will now be able to go ahead and commission Aquamaintain, a highly regarded waterways design company, to suggest a solution to our problem with the culvert, where the bank is clearly being washed away. The PC as riparian owner gave consent for this survey and design in summer 2024. Once we have some design suggestions, we will hold public engagement meetings with villagers, riparian owners, and Suffolk Highways to try to reach consensus on a course of action.

### **Attachment 8.2 – EV Charging Point Report**

JW visited the charging point at Tuddenham and reported back as follows;-

Henry and I were able to visit Tuddenham St Mary on 13th August and met up with John Norman the Treasurer of the village hall committee.

They have a fabulous new and impressive village hall which opened in May 2023.

We were given a tour of the building as well as discussing their experience with EV chargers.

The hall is managed by a charitable committee in very much the same way as Hawstead Community Council manages our hall.

The hall bears a striking resemblance to our hall although it's considerably larger with a capacity of 260.

Back in 2016 representatives from Tuddenham visited Hawstead and have loosely based their design on our building

<https://www.tuddenhamstmaryvh.co.uk/>

They obtained various grants to enable the hall to be constructed and eventually obtained planning permission from West Suffolk Council in 2019.

A planning condition was imposed that 2 EV charging points be provided in the car park.

They have 2 EV charging points on the parking area with a capacity of 7kW.

The charge is normally at 50p per unit.

Usage has been limited to the odd visitor to the hall and occasionally by cricketers using the adjoining cricket ground.

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A few villagers have used the chargers overnight for their company cars when the rate is reduced.

The administration is currently a complication that the treasurer is trying to amend with the company operating the chargers.

In the first year of operation receipts were appx £72 so it's definitely not lucrative.

A long term 15 year lease is involved.

In summary the chargers are certainly not used a great deal by locals and were installed to comply with planning approval.

Having chargers may be of benefit to the occasional visitor to the hall but overall, of very limited benefit to the local community.

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