

**HAWSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
AT THE VILLAGE HALL  
on THURSDAY 13<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2025 at 7.30pm.**

**Present:** P Cllrs R Alexander (Chair), J Lomas-Farley J Bulbrook, H Brewis, A Brewis, C, Carr & J West. C Hibbert (Clerk).  
SC Cllr K Soons. 3 members of the public.

**Apologies:** N/A.

*The meeting started at 7.30pm.*

The filming statement was highlighted.

**1. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES AND CONSIDER ANY APPLICATIONS FOR APPROVAL OF ABSENCE:** N/A.

**2. PUBLIC FORUM**

**2.1 Public participation.** A resident commented that the County Council is under a statutory duty to promote biodiversity through the exercise of its functions; SCC should be held to account to provide a strategy demonstrating how it intends to promote biodiversity in its approach to discussions with Hopkins Homes/ efforts to secure restoration of the damaged Hawstead verges.

**2.2 County Council** (taken out of turn – see below).

**2.3 West Suffolk Council.** See Item 2.2 above.

**2.4 Police** The current Suffolk Constabulary report can be found at

<https://www.suffolk.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/suffolk/constables-county-feb---online.pdf>

**2.5 Presentation by HCC (playground proposals)** JS made a presentation about the HCC plans to redevelop the village hall playground, a copy of which will be uploaded onto the website. HCC has some money set aside (Covid-19 grants) to cover the first tranche of the associated costs and will be looking to corporate sponsors/ grant giving bodies to cover additional costs.

*KS joined the meeting at 7.40pm.*

Discussion followed about the costs of topping up the playbark annually, the potential use of volunteers to top up this bark and whether cleaning costs for use of the toilet facilities during construction had been factored in. KS highlighted that she had circa £3k available in locality grant (this year/next year's allowance) which could be made available to this project. There was agreement in principle to the Council supporting HCC by applying for grant for various items which could then be bought and gifted to HCC, subject to guidance from SALC on the recovery of VAT. Discussion followed about whether Hopkins Homes could be pressed for financial support for this project.

The Council thanked HCC for their impressive, high quality presentation.

**2.2 County Council (taken out of turn).** SC Cllr K Soons presented her report, a copy of which will be uploaded onto the website. Discussion followed about; (i) the A134 closures. Concern was expressed about the application to delay the relief road. KS urged those present to continue to report issues caused by the traffic management scheme on the SCC online highways reporting tool – even where SCC reject issues for not meeting intervention thresholds. Discussion followed about whether Hopkins Homes would be forced to contribute to towards the costs of verge restorations etc.; (ii) plans to keep Suffolk libraries open and in use as community hubs; and (iii) the implications of devolution for Suffolk.

KS **AGREED** to follow up with WSC planning enforcement about the apparent failure to implement the approved landscaping scheme at Woodlands (DC/22/0695/FUL).

**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 items 2.1, 9.9 and 9.10 as

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honorary auditor of HCC; RA declared an interest in items 8.3, 2.1,9.9 and 9.10 as HCC Land Trustee/ Chair of the RLCP.

**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 3rd<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> FEBRUARY 2025.**

The minutes from the Parish Council meetings dated 3rd and 21<sup>st</sup> February 2025 were **APPROVED** and signed as a true and accurate record of this meeting.

**5. MATTERS ARISING**

A suggestion for the Council to consider creating footpath leaflets for Hawstead, having been previously received, the meeting heard that the Chair has approached a resident to see whether there is any interest in taking this project forward. Update to next meeting.

Servicing arrangements for the generator (winter 2025) are yet to be confirmed.

A fallen tree is yet to be removed from the Brook – work to be done when water levels/ nesting season restraints allow. The meeting heard that this fallen tree is close to an established kingfisher nest.

The suggestion was made at the January meeting as to the installation of a commemorative brazier on the village green; it was **AGREED** not to pursue this initiative further in the short term due to competing priorities/cost.

**6. CHAIR REPORT**

The Chair reported that she had written to Hopkins Homes asking for information in response to various issues raised on the village WhatsApp group and had received a written response.

Discussion followed about (i) the need for Council correspondence to be sent via the clerk and shared with the A134 working party where appropriate; (ii) the quality of the statement received from Hopkins Homes and whether it added any new information into the public domain; (iii) the need to stay focused on how to secure best outcomes for the village - including securing restoration of the verges; (iv) the view that the education contribution from Hopkins Homes will indirectly benefit school age children in Hawstead; (v) the lack of night time work on the Hopkins Homes site during all periods of road closure; (vi) the appalling condition of Bells Lane; (vii) the need for 'Village Green – Keep Off Signs' in place of the current Nature Reserve signs; (viii) allocation of s106 monies and how these might benefit Hawstead residents (if at all).

**7. REPORTS**

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

**7.1 A134 Working Report** The meeting heard about the activities of the working party since the last meeting, as set out on the attached timeline and report; data about car numbers travelling down Bells Lane/ Bury Road has been collected (thanks to JB and AB); meetings have been set up with the leaders of WSC and SCC in order that the issues being experienced by Hawstead residents as a result of the A134 closures can be highlighted; a meeting has already taken place with the local MP and representatives from neighbouring PCs; the MP has agreed to write to the leader of SCC reiterating the request for Low Green to be re-opened. Discussion followed about the proposal to delay the relief road and what bearing - if any - this would have on Hawstead residents. See item 9.6 for **AGREED** action points.

**7.2 Communications;** the meeting heard that the various communication systems were working well.

**7.3 Highways and safety;** the meeting heard that; (i) there is an enormous pothole on Whepstead Road; and (ii) running water from blocked gullies at Larkfield Corner continues to create hazardous conditions; these issues have been reported to SCC repeatedly, but SCC have to date not taken any remedial action.

**7.4 Volunteering** The meeting heard that some work has been done at Hawstead Brook to clear the brash/tidy logs allowing visitors to enjoy the snowdrop drifts; a successful working party had undertaken work at the Millennium Field hedge.

**7.5 Clerk.** The clerk report was received and **NOTED**. The meeting **NOTED** that the clerk had worked some additional hours during the early part of 2025 and **AGREED** to award an honoraria payment (15 hours at contractual hourly rate).

**8. CONSERVATION**

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**8.1 Greens;** the meeting heard that; (i) the mapping has been amended in readiness for the new sustainable farming incentive (SFI) scheme; (ii) confirmation is awaited for the date at which an application under the new SFI scheme may be made by those in an existing environmental stewardship agreement, such as the Council.

**8.2 Footpaths (inc footpath rep);** a report was received from the footpath rep, for which thanks; concerns about the WSC proposals to alter the dog bin servicing arrangements were **NOTED**. After discussion it was **AGREED** that the clerk would draft an article for the Village Voice requesting owners to keep dogs under control around the village/ pick up and dispose of their waste.

**8.3 River proposals –update on grant funding.** The Chair confirmed that; (i) Anglian Water has announced an intention to undertake a water quality survey of the River Lark (Hawstead to Prick Willow) subject to AWINIP grant funding being available in Autumn 2025; (ii) further grants may be available to support any identified actions; (iii) a fluvial audit is currently being undertaken by Southampton University to identify the impact of sediment on the chalk stream. The meeting thanked the Chair (in her capacity as Chair of the River Lark Catchment Partnership) for this work. Discussion followed about the broken culvert pipe which was lifted out of the stream in 2024 which remains on the bank and is an eyesore. It was **AGREED** that the clerk should request SCC to take action to remove/remedy via the SCC online highways reporting tool.

**8.4 Tree work** See update on tree work at item 5 above.

## 9. TO CONSIDER

**9.1 WSC correspondence re bins** The WSC proposal to replace existing dog bins with a single wheelie bin-style general/dog waste bin was discussed. It was **NOTED** that the current dog waste bins are emptied by WSC (at no charge to the Council); concern was expressed about any reduction in the number of dog bins available for use and the danger of the new bin type being overrun by household waste. It was **AGREED** to make enquiries of WSC about the possibility of retaining the current bins and paying WSC to empty these. It was **AGREED** that the Council should also relay comments made by HCC re the bins near the village hall.

**9.2 WSC proposed three year contract** The amended three year contract was **APPROVED** (£2,473.04pa exc VAT with years 2 and 3 index linked to CPI Index)

**9.3 WhatsApp use policy.** The attached policy was **APPROVED**. Those present were requested to limit use of this method of communication to office hours where possible.

**9.4 Update asset register.** The asset register attached was reviewed and **APPROVED**.

**9.5 Risk assessment.** The risk assessments for 2025/2026 were reviewed and **APPROVED**.

**9.6 Approve any recommendations of the A134 Working Party;** it was **AGREED** that the Council would write again to the leader of SCC seeking the re-opening of Low Green, asking for the relief road not to be delayed and requesting replacement signage for the village green and that the clerk would circulate a draft after the meeting for approval.

**9.7 Speedwatch** A proposal to reinstate the Speedwatch initiative was discussed; this will involve identifying a team of 6-8 volunteers who are willing to undertake training/ complete necessary paperwork and undertake between them at least 12 sessions pa; village locations will need to be identified; equipment and training to be provided at no cost to the Council. The Council **AGREED** to support this initiative subject to being able to identify willing volunteers. It was **AGREED** to appeal for support via the WhatsApp Group and Village Voice.

**9.8 Litter picking** CR has confirmed that is no longer able to continue with his litter picking efforts around the village. The meeting **NOTED** the remarkable contribution he has made over a long period of time and **RECORDED THANKS** to him. It was **AGREED** to appeal for further volunteers via the Village Voice and consider the need for additional safety equipment if required in due course. Consideration would also be given to arranging a village litter pick after the A134 works have finished when there is less traffic on the roads

**9.9 Village hall car park** The meeting was reminded that in the past the Council and HCC have contributed jointly to the cost of any work necessary to maintain the village hall car park from time to time; the car park would benefit from a refresh of gravel shortly (approximate cost £550 exc VAT). The meeting **AGREED** in principle to contribute again to such costs, as and when HCC advise further work is required. Discussion followed about the timing of such work in relation to the playground works/ hall bookings.

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Approved

**9.10 Consider response (if any required) to HCC playground proposal** The Council **NOTED** its support in principle to the HCC proposal. It was **AGREED** to consider any requests for funding further equipment at a later date.

**9.11 Storage of meeting recordings.** It was **AGREED** in principle that the Council would create a YouTube channel to store recordings of meetings, with the clerk as administrator. Documents can be taken down/uploaded as required at zero cost to the Council using this method.

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

**10.1 Planning notifications;** The following notification was received;-  
DC/24/1575/HH

Address Hawstead Hall Nowton Road Hawstead Suffolk IP29 5NH

Proposal Householder planning application - a. alteration to fenestration of existing barn b. render to front and side elevation c. cladding to side elevation

Decision Approve application

Decision Issued Date Mon 03 Mar 2025

## **11. FINANCE**

**11.1 To receive and approve the bi-monthly financial summary for January – February 2025;** the bi-monthly report was received and **APPROVED**.

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

	Detail	Net	VAT	Gross
1	CH website refund	59.97	11.99	71.96
2	HMRC	34.00		34.00
3	CH wage	1003.40		1003.40
4	CH exps	66.99		66.99
5	HMRC underpayment (Already Paid)	67.15		67.15

**11.3 Appoint internal auditor;** the meeting **AGREED** to appoint SALC as internal auditor for 2024-2025 (£183 exc VAT).

**11.4 Review adequacy of internal controls** The statement of internal controls (attached) was reviewed and **APPROVED**. It was **NOTED** that JB would complete the internal controls report for the six month period to year end before 31 March 2025.

**12. CORRESPONDENCE** The following correspondence was received;-

**12.1** Playground reports;

**12.2** Local Plan decision letter;

**12.3** Various A134 works correspondence.

**13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING Thursday 14th May 2025 all at 7.30pm** to follow APM at 7pm.

*The meeting closed at 9.55pm.*

Distribution

All Cllrs/Website/Noticeboard

Signature.....

**Attachment 7.1**  
**A134 Working Party Timeline Report**  
Hawstead PC A134 working party report

JB/HB/AB/JW

The working party was set up in order to gather information and carry out some work on behalf of the Parish Council in between meetings with respect to the A134 closures. Thanks to JB for monitoring Bells Lane and to AB for surveying The Pound.

The group has met on a regular basis since the last PC meeting and is endeavouring to keep the pressure on those that can help improve the situation.

HB measured the traffic on Bells Lane prior to the disruption and day time traffic was approximately 12 vehicles per hour - so sadly at peak times this means that traffic has increased by 10 to 14 times - which is obviously massive.

Pound traffic volume

Vehicle Type

Date Day of week Time period HGV/LGV Emergency Cars Bike / M. Bike Total

27/02/25 Thursday 07:35 to 08:35 28 0 222 0 252

28/02/25 Friday 07:30 to 08:30 24 0 160 1 187

01/03/25 Saturday 07.30 to 08.30 12 0 62 0 74

10:20 to 11:20 13 125 0 138

02/03/25 Sunday 07:35 to 08:35 5 5 0 21

10:20 to 11:20 6 83 6 95

03/03/25 Monday 07:35 to 08:30 25 207 0 232

04/03/25 Tuesday 07:40 to 08:40 35 204 0 239

05/03/25 Wednesday 07:30 to 08:30 30 199 0 229

Thank you AB for these data - we don't have pre works data but it looks like a huge increase.

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- 22nd February working party took aerial footage of Hawstead Lane showing total chaos on the first day of closure - footage sent to various parties including both MPs and the Bury Free Press.
- 23rd February night trip (01:50) to see what work was happening on the A134 - absolutely nothing from 22:30 until 08:00
- 23rd February HB witnessed Low Green unmanned during closure of A134 for at least 15 minutes. This very serious error was reported to the Ambulance and police control rooms. This incident was acknowledged and assurances have been given that it won't happen again.
- 24th February ANPR automatic speed sign organised for the village.
- 24th February no active traffic management observed on the A134.
- 24th February press reports (with photo) of ambulance stuck in traffic light queue on A134
- 25th February active traffic management observed on A134 achieving even north and southbound queues.
- 25th February Hopkins Homes applies for delay to building the relief road. Various emails and phone calls made to try and find out what can be done to resist this and whether it is open to public input. KS is pushing on our behalf but no answers yet
- 26th February HB put keep left sign at bottom of Bells Lane.
- 26th February on line teams meeting with Highways, SCC, Hopkins Homes and Parish Councils. HB challenged Eddy Bathgate from Hopkins Homes as to why so little work was being carried out at weekends and none at night. No satisfactory answer given.
- 28th February HB has one to one meeting with Nick Timothy MP. Much discussed about lack of consultation, lack of planning, damage to villages and loss to local businesses. NT keen to get to the bottom of how this was allowed to happen.
- 12th March - no active traffic management on A134 10 minute queues one way with no queues the other way - not good for emergency services.
- 13th March HB to attend meeting with Nick Timothy at Friendly Loaf and then Sicklesmere post office
- 13th March Parish council meeting
- 17th March meeting with Cliff Waterman leader of West Suffolk Council
- 21st March meeting scheduled with Mathew Hicks leader of SCC with Hawstead Parish Council working party

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Evidence and files available for download and review: <https://we.tl/t-BBorj0ZwNm>

(Link is valid until the 19th of March)

Timeline of events concerning A134 closure

- (5th February unpublicised meeting at Southgate community centre. Parish councils not were not notified or invited)
- 12th February message from PC clerk. Do any councillors want to talk to BFP about A134. This was the first clue that something bad was around the corner.
- 13th February HB spoke to Karen Soons to find out what was happening.
- 13th February hastily convened meeting of 6/7 Parish councillors to think what could be done. (not an official PC meeting as no time to advertise)
- 13th February until present time various traffic surveys carried out with emphasis on Bells Lane and the Pound.
- 14th February Network Assurance told KS that they planned to be at a meeting in Nowton on 19th February.
- 14th February HB took before chaos video footage of Bells Lane, Hawstead Lane and Low Green. Road measurements taken and time lapse footage sent to KS, Network Assurance, SCC, Highways, Nick Timothy MP, Peter Prinsley MP and others.
- 14th February one hour survey of Bells Lane 08:00-09:00 12 cars in an hour
- 17th February we were advised that there will be gate keepers at Low Green during A134 closures
- 19th February at 16:00 (3 hours before meeting) Network Assurance decided not to come to the Nowton Meeting citing 'safety concerns'.
- 19th February public meeting at Nowton Village Hall attended by four Hawstead parish councillors. Chairman of Nowton PC confirmed that Nowton had not asked for Low Green closure. Bury Free Press in attendance.
- 20th February HB brief appearance on Anglia News to talk about the disruption.
- 21st February Extraordinary meeting of the Hawstead Parish Council to discuss A134 closures.

Working party set up.

- 21st February letter received from Highways saying they would set up an online meeting to facilitate large numbers after their no show at Nowton. No such meeting was set up but a meeting restricted to Chairs and Clerks of Parish Councils was organised for 26th Feb
- 22nd February working party took aerial footage of Hawstead Lane on first day of closure showing total chaos. Footage sent to SCC,HH, Nick Timothy MP, Peter Prinsley MP and the Bury Free Press
- 23rd February at 01:50 hours - PC working party observed no work being carried out on A134

Signature.....

- 23rd February working party witnessed Low Green unmanned during closure for at least 15 minutes. This very serious failure was notified immediately to the ambulance control room in Norwich and the Police control room in Ipswich. This mistake has been acknowledged and we have been assured it won't happen again.
  - 24th February automatic speed sign organised for the village.
  - 24th February meeting of HH and SCC . Parish Council was not invited.
  - 25th February Hopkins Homes put in an application to delay building the relief road- PC working party have sent emails to find out whether we have any say on this and when is the decision being made. No answer yet - still chasing.
  - 26th February HB puts keep left sign at bottom of Bells Lane.
  - 26th February Nature Reserve signs put on Village Green by SCC/Palmers.
  - 26th February on line Teams meeting with Highways, SCC and Hopkins Homes and Parish Councils. HB challenged Hopkins Homes as to why such little work occurring at the weekend. No satisfactory answer given.
  - 28th February HB has one to one meeting with Nick Timothy MP. NT expressed a desire to get to the bottom of how this appalling situation has developed.
  - 13th March Hawstead Parish Council meeting.
- Ø 17th March Working party meeting with Cliff Waterman Leader West Suffolk Council
- 21st meeting scheduled with Mathew Hicks leader of SCC with Hawstead PC working party

### **Attachment 9.3 WhatsApp Use Guidelines**

Hawstead Parish Council is an elected body which makes decisions in duly convened public meetings. In between meetings, information is shared between members and the clerk by email correspondence. It is appreciated that from time to time members and clerk of Hawstead Parish Council need to share various pieces of information and news within the team speedily. With this in mind a dedicated Hawstead PC WhatsApp group has been established.

All members of the Council are welcome to join the group and we encourage you to join to receive the latest updates on scheduling of extraordinary meetings and any particularly urgent matter which needs to be brought to members' attention quickly.

The clerk will be responsible for the group as group admin and with your consent will add your phone number to the group. There is no obligation to use this channel of communication. Please be aware that the number you provide below will be visible and available to the rest of the group. You can opt to leave the group at any time and if you leave the Council's membership/employment your number will be automatically removed from the group.

#### **WhatsApp Etiquette**

Here are some tips to ensure everyone gets the most out of the Hawstead PC WhatsApp group:

- Understand that members of Hawstead PC give their time voluntarily; the clerk is employed for a few hours each week; it may not always be convenient or possible to respond within a particular timescale.
- Understand that Hawstead PC is a public authority and as such all communications on this group (and other mediums) are subject to Freedom of information Act 2000 and Data Protection legislation.
- Remember to be considerate and respectful to others

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- Please be polite and observe the same level of courtesy as you would do if you were speaking to someone face to face
- Please refrain from commenting or sharing content (including videos or pictures) that could be interpreted as inappropriate, demeaning or inflammatory
- Please only discuss work related or business matters on the group and use alternative groups or chats for personal discussions
- Please do not share or discuss personal information of any residents or colleagues (this including names, contact numbers etc.)
- Please do not share confidential information about any residents or individuals on the group
- Understand that the discussions will be moderated by the group admin and any inappropriate activity may lead to further investigation and potential action under the disciplinary procedure/ grievance procedure/ The Suffolk Code of Conduct.

If you have any queries or concerns about the group or its content please discuss this with [clerk@hawstead-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@hawstead-pc.gov.uk).

**Attachment 9.4 Register of assets  
Hawstead Parish Council; Register of assets as at 13 March 2025**

Description	Location/location held	Value	Date of acquisition (where known)
The Green	Adjoining Bells Lane and Bury Road	£1 nominal value	
Pound Green	Bury Road, adjacent to Almshouse	£1 nominal value	
Bull Green	Bull Lane	£1 nominal value	
Brook Green	Adjoining Bells Lane	£1 nominal value	
Millennium Field	Church Road – adjoining Cemetery	£1 nominal value	
Village sign	The Pound	£3157	
Bus shelter	Junction of Bury/Lawshall Road and Whepstead Road	£2000	
Swings x 2	The Green – southern boundary	£1501	
Seats x 3	(1)The Green – adjacent to swings (2) The Green adjacent to play area (3) Millennium Field	(1) £557 (2) (3) £300 Total £857	(1) 2015 (2) ? (3) ?
Memorial bench x1	The Green adjacent to play area	£500	
Dog bins x 2	(1)The Green – village hall car park (2) The Green –Bells Lane	£150	
Dog fouling signs	The Green – various locations	£148	2014
Litter bins x1	Adjacent to bus shelter	£100	
Grit bins x 13	Various locations around village	(1) £687.50 (x5) (2) £115 (x2) (3) 297 (x3) (4) 366.92 x (3)	(1) ?  (2) 2014 (3) 2019

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		Total £1466.42	(4) 2022
		77	2025
Scoops			
(5) 1x set outside xmas lights; (6) Internal decorations as follows: Xmas tree LED lights x1 2 x colour garlands, 1x white garland, plus timer in box with connector	Village hall	(1)£235 (2) £345 Total £580	(1) 2014 (2) ?
Emergency plan equipment; generator x 1, gas ring burnerx1, gas cylinders x2	1 Manor Cottages; The Green Village Hall; Kellycroft, the Green	£594	
Noticeboards x3	(1) Village hall car park; (2) Church Road adjacent to Pinford End Farmhouse, (3) The Pound.	(1) £1013.50 (2) £913.50 (3) £340 (est) Total=£2267	(1) 2014 (2) 2014 (3) ?
Interpretation Board	The Green	£990	2019
Finger posts x 2	Hawstead Brook	£400	2019
Gating to village entrances		£598	
Village bench and table	The Pound	£800	
Goal posts	The Green	£215	2014
Defibrillator	Village Hall	£2020	2015
Speedwatch signage	Village Hall	£170	2015
Bat boxes	The Green	£114	2016
Orchard sign	Millennium Field	£98	2021
Well	Bull Green	Notional value	?
Footbridge	Hawstead Brook	£1375	2017
Speed gun	c/o Cllr West	£1110	2017
Phone box	Pinford End	£1	2017
Defibrillator	Pinford End	£2010	2019
Waymarker signs	Brook Green	£210	2019
Road signage	Larkfield Corner	£324.40	2022
Tree plaque	Village green	£50	2022
Owl Box	Village Green	£178	2024
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£24,065.82</b>	

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**Attachment 11.4 – Internal control statement**

HAWSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

INTERNAL CONTROL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2025

**1. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY**

Hawstead Parish Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

The Council is responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

**2. THE PURPOSE OF THE SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROLS**

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

**3. THE INTERNAL CONTROL ENVIRONMENT**

**THE COUNCIL:**

The Council reviews its obligations and objectives and approves budgets for the following year at a full meeting of the Council. The Council will approve the level of precept for the following financial year at a full meeting of the Council. The Council monitors progress against objectives, financial systems and procedures, budgetary control and carries out regular reviews of financial matters throughout the year. The Council carries out regular reviews of its internal controls, systems and procedures.

**CLERK TO THE COUNCIL/RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER:**

The Council has appointed a Clerk to the Council who acts as the Council's advisor and administrator. The Clerk is the Council's Financial Officer and is responsible for administering the Council's finances. The Clerk is responsible for advising on the day to day compliance with laws and regulations that the Council is subject to and for managing risks. The Clerk also provides advice to help the Council ensure that its procedures, control systems and policies are adhered to.

**PAYMENTS:**

All payments are reported to the Council for approval. Two members of the Council must sign every cheque or order for payment. The signatories should consider each cheque or order for payment against the relevant invoice, sign the invoice and initial the cheque counterfoil/payment schedule. All authorised signatories are members of the Council. No officer of the Council can sign cheques. Online payments may be made by the Council provide that two members of the Council have considered a list of proposed online payments against each relevant invoice and signed each invoice together with the list of payments.

**INCOME:**

All income is received and banked in the Council's name in a timely manner and reported to the Council.

**RISK ASSESSMENTS / RISK MANAGEMENT:**

The Council reviews its risk assessment annually, and regularly reviews its systems and controls.

**INTERNAL AUDIT:**

The Council appoints an independent internal auditor who reports to the Council on the adequacy of it's:

- Records
- Procedures
- Systems
- Internal Control
- Regulations
- Risk Management

**EXTERNAL AUDIT: INTERNAL AUDIT:**

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The Council's external auditors submit an annual certificate of audit which is presented to the Council.

**4. REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS**

The Council has responsibility for conducting an annual review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control, which should include a review of the effectiveness of internal audit. The results of that review must be considered by the Council, which should also approve the Statement on Internal Control.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk/RFO

Approved and adopted by Hawstead Parish Council

Meeting date and minute no:

Signature.....