

Annual Meeting of the Parish for Hasketon Parish
on Friday 8th May 2026 at 6.00 pm
FINAL Minutes

Present: Will Longe (WL) (Chair), Iain Whyte (IW) (Vice Chairman), Parish Councillors (PCllrs), Niki Field (NF), William HELM (BH) and Steve LECKIE (SL), (Hasketon Parish Clerk).
Also present was District Councillor (DCllr) Dan Clery (DC).

There was one member of the public (MOTP) in attendance.

1. The meeting was opened at 6.00pm by the Chair who welcomed everyone to the Annual meeting of the Parish.

2. Apologies for absence:

Apologies were received from Parish Councillors Ann Turner (AT), Beccy Batley (RB), and Councillor Martin SMITH (MS).

3. Minutes of the last Annual Meeting of the Parish:

Minutes from the 2025 meeting had been previously circulated. SL indicated chairperson had endorsed the minutes last year, however SL gave an overview, and they were accepted by the meeting on the night.

4. Chairman's Report and Finance:

WL read his Chairman's report.

First, I'd like to acknowledge the change wrought in yesterday's Council Election which may well bring a very different direction to our county. I would also like to congratulate our County Councillor, Elaine Bryce or Joseland for being re-elected as our representative.

I thought I'd make this report about the potential we have as Parish Council.

I've just returned from walking through the North of England on the Pennine Way and beyond the sublime beauty of landscape and nature I want to share with you my over-riding impression of the warmth of the people, their hospitality and pride of place, their appreciation for their own small slice of our kingdom. That warmth is something special, something easily dropped in the headlong rush of life, in the head on deluge of data, in the constant sense of danger ahead when we forget so easily what it means to acknowledge and welcome our fellow human beings.

So, thank you all for giving your time so readily, for being part of our community and for being here.

I'll start with some reflections: As the world seemingly heads into dangerous waters and life feels ever narrower and impossible, the routines of all our daily lives continue as does our small section of local government where the diligent administration of Steve Leckie our Clerk enables us to perform our various duties. This time last year, the admirable Stuart Dack stepped down as Chair and after a few months with Iain Whyte the Vice Chair steadfastly holding the reins, I stepped into the role which left a councillor vacancy that was filled by Martin Smith in November. I've been really very impressed with how Council affairs are managed and scrutinised. On the council, Ann Turner supports Steve with the finances while also developing the emergency plan; there is a strong interest in keeping our environment healthy with Nikki Field who looks after re-wilding and bulb planting and together with Becky Batley oversees the play area and car park while Bill Helm overseeing footpaths

and trees and who also introduced Dr Debbie Verrill as a new Tree Warden for the village. And Iain not only is Vice Chair of the Parish Council but is also Chair of the Victory Hall and looks after our website and communications. Regrettably both Nikki and Ann are stepping down from the Council due to personal commitments.

Our Parish is one of the 26 parishes of the Carlford Division represented by Elaine our County Councillor, one of the 19 parishes represented by Dan Clery our East Suffolk Councillor and our population makes up barely 1% of the vote for our MP.

We are the smallest unit of local government. Small, but small can be great, one of the things that attracted me to the Parish Council was the meticulous organisation and openness and the opportunity to make a difference that platform brings.

As an example in November when Cadent's necessary road closure, given at short notice caused havoc for us all and threatened the economics of both the pub and Oak Tree Farm's Christmas tree business, our efforts ensured that liaison with Cadent was effective and produced positive results. Cadent I have to say were excellent in making themselves available when in fact they could simply have ploughed ahead regardless.

And so, some statistics:

We've had -

- 6 Parish Council meetings
- 2 Extraordinary Council meetings
- 1 Annual Meeting of the Parish
- 14 Planning applications debated
- 2 formal meetings with Cadent about the road closure
- 8 liaison meetings with Cadent
- 4 Almost decisive meetings about Highways discussing road use and disruption

£350 Contributed to Charities including the Air Ambulance who have offered defibrillator training.

Masses of bulbs planted

- 1 hedge planted albeit not without a little controversy
- 1 water project for the allotments funded

And while the Village Fete had a bye year, the Victory Hall hosted 13 community events:

- 6 Breakfast Clubs
- 1 Quiz Night
- 1 Plant and Book Sale – highly successful
- 1 Final Meeting for the Children of the Raj for people born in India of UK parents in the 1940s.
- 4 Lunches for the Evergreens, the village elders
- Not to mention the ongoing programmes of classes held in the Hall

And this year Kindewood took over the mowing and hedge work on the green and have done a great job and there is more support to make those areas better as we move forwards.

And so looking forwards:

As the external world impinges, we prepare for the imminent highway chaos with the A12 upgrades and the slings and arrows of future bypass shenanigans, let's keep to our path, concentrate on making our corner of Suffolk the best we can, making this our village a place that brings us together. We have this amazing platform from which great things can spring and so, to that end it's important that we plan with ambition and an eye on reality and also appoint someone to keep track of highways.

Do please contact us, come to our Parish Council Meetings where we welcome positive, creative contributions. Details of our meetings are published on our website www.hasketonparishcouncil.gov.uk

I finish with deep thanks to fellow members of the Council for your time and effort, it is a pleasure working with you.

SL gave an overview of the End of Year Accounts (period 01/4/2025 to 31/03/2026)

Clerk reported an overall balance of £14314.92; being £9628.80 Savings account and £4686.12 current account.

VAT to be claimed and received for the year is £711.47.

SL then spoke about the grants received during the year and the requirements of their spend. In total £3950 was received.

There was no spend of Capital Reserves.

SL stated a budget prediction for the year was £13483 but the actual total spend was £10951.68.

5. Comments/Questions from Residents:

The MOP present stated they had concerns over restricting access to the allotments and signage should not restrict access. SL explained the issues reported of dog walking and fouling and vehicular damage. SL stated a hedge had been planted and removed as a user had objected and a fence was an expensive option. The MOP felt residents should be able to sit in the area. SL stated the signs would reflect the wishes of the council and parishioners and wording was discussed.

6. Close of Meeting:

There being no other business the Chair WL declared the annual meeting of the Parish closed at 6.28pm.

Signed: CHAIR

Date.....