

POTTER HEIGHAM PARISH COUNCIL
5 Sceptre Close, Hellesdon Norwich NR6 5HE
Tel: 07917841665 **Email:** potterheighamparishcouncil@gmail.com

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2026

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Potter Heigham held on **Wednesday 22 April 2026 at 7:30pm** in the Village Hall.

Present: The Parish Council Chairperson, S. Turner, presided over the meeting and the following Councillors were present: H. Bartlett, S. Chapman, H. May, J. May, D. Pickering, K. Lowes, G. Auston and B. Standen,

In Attendance: Parish Clerk L. Bateman, John Blackburn from the National Wildlife Trust, 2 members of the public.

Meeting was brought to order: 7.31pm

1. Welcome from the Chairperson

Cllr Turner welcomed the meeting and thanked everyone for coming. She thanked the Parish Councillors and the Parish Clerk for their support and hard work.

2. To consider apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Norfolk County Councillor R. Price and District Councillor H. Blathwayt.

3. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 23 April 2025

The minutes were **AGREED** as an accurate record and signed by the Chairperson
Proposed Cllr S. Chapman, Seconded Cllr H. May, all in favour

4. To receive a presentation from guest speaker from the Norfolk Wildlife Trust

John Blackburn from the Norfolk Wildlife Trust delivered a presentation providing an overview of the Trust's history, activities and key achievements. Highlights included the increase in the breeding population of Bitterns, the return of nesting Marsh Harriers and a rise in butterfly numbers.

He also outlined the Wilder Hickling Project, which included the acquisition of land in 2017 and the purchase of the Pleasure Boat Inn in 2023. The project's aim is to create a landscape where both people and wildlife can thrive together while improving resilience to climate change. The purchase of the Inn is intended to strengthen community engagement, reach a broader and more diverse audience and encourage greater environmental stewardship.

Plans are also in place to replace the bird hide on Weavers' Way, with funding currently being sought. In addition, British White cattle have been reintroduced to grazing land in Potter Heigham.

5. To receive Parish Council Reports

a) Parish Council Chairperson

Cllr S. Turner then delivered a presentation (Appendix A) detailing the work and the successes of the parish council for the past year.

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b) Parish Council Leads

- **Allotments:** The report from Cllr D. Pickering was presented (Appendix B).
- **Sam2 Speed Awareness Monitor:** The SAM2 device had recently been bought back into action and the analysis of data would resume shortly.
- **Staithe:** options for the Staithe quay heading replacement were detailed which were being considered by the Broads Authority.

c) Financial Report (Clerk)

The Financial Report by the Clerk was presented (Appendix C).

6. To receive reports from community representatives and organisations.

a) County Councillor

The report from Cllr. Price will be uploaded to the website (Appendix D). The clerk read out a summary in Cllr Price's Absence:

The Council has delivered major funding across social care (£40m+), transport (£50m+), highways and community projects, while maintaining a balanced £613.8m budget despite national financial pressures.

Bus usage has increased by 26% following major investment and Norfolk ranks among the top-performing counties for highways satisfaction, supported by ongoing local road and safety schemes.

Initiatives such as the £500k Community Fund, AI-supported fall prevention programme, environmental action (850,000+ trees) and investment in young people are aimed at strengthening communities and long-term sustainability.

b) District Councillor

No report was submitted by the District Councillor

c) Police

Beat Manager PC Pritty provided the following report which will be uploaded to the website. (Appendix E). The report was read by the Clerk in his absence:

Due to ongoing health and work-related circumstances, PC Pritty has had to take a significant amount of time away from operational duties and have recently been office-based. As a result, he will retire in June. The post has now been advertised and a replacement Beat Manager will be appointed in due course.

In the meantime, colleagues from the Safer Neighbourhood Team at North Walsham will continue to provide cover and support for the parish.

He would like to thank the parish for their support over the past four years. It has been a privilege to serve the community.

d) Broads Authority

A report was submitted by the Broads Authority which would be uploaded to the website (Appendix F). The Clerk read out a summary of the report:

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Peter Worrall and Jessica Alleguen continue as the full-time Rangers, supported by new Seasonal Ranger Chris Dunn. Lewis Lavery has transferred to the Southern Rivers team.

Site volunteers continue routine maintenance, including vegetation management, litter picking, path edging and sign cleaning. Scheduled weed spraying will take place three times between April and October.

Maintenance work at Bridge Green 24-hour mooring remains in good condition and new signs have been installed on both Potter Heigham bridges. Ongoing repairs and routine maintenance continue at Potter Heigham Staithe while longer-term improvements are planned.

Members were reminded that a 7.5-tonne weight restriction remains in place at the Staithe, except for refuse vehicles.

Their launch will remain based at Hickling to maintain a strong ranger presence on both sides of Potter Heigham Bridge. Vessel compliance checks, speed enforcement, safety patrol and monitoring of bright lights affecting navigation will continue throughout the season.

e) Village Hall Management Committee

The report by D. Pickering was presented which will be uploaded to the website (Appendix G). The report outlined a busy and productive year. Significant maintenance and improvement works included repairs to the annex roof, redecoration of the annex, installation of new flooring, curtains and tables, replacement of the garage roof and doors and ongoing work to resolve sewage and electrical issues. Other improvements included a new fridge-freezer, sound system, card reader, bench, entrance mat and timed lighting in the ladies' toilets.

The kitchen achieved the highest food hygiene rating, while volunteers carried out extensive maintenance to the children's play area and surrounding grounds. The hall continues to be well used, despite the Marine Cadets relocating, with hire charges remaining unchanged and membership of user groups increasing.

The Committee has introduced a digital compliance system to manage policies, maintenance records and risk assessments and undertook a community survey which highlighted support for improvements to the playing field and hall facilities. Funding opportunities for these projects are being explored.

Fundraising events raised over £6,700 during the year. Despite this, accounts showed a deficit of almost £6,000 due to major repair works, requiring the use of reserves. The Committee expressed its gratitude to volunteers, trustees and the Parish Council for their continued support.

f) Norfolk Neighbourhood Watch

Cllr Auston provided a report as the Deputy Chair of the Norfolk Neighbourhood Watch, which will be uploaded to the website (Appendix H). She outlined its role in supporting safer, more connected communities through local schemes, crime

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prevention, community engagement and partnerships with Norfolk Constabulary and other organisations. The report highlighted ongoing work to tackle antisocial behaviour, raise awareness of cybercrime, provide training opportunities and engage younger people. Members were advised that Potter Heigham currently has a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme on Market Road, with opportunities for residents to join or establish additional local schemes.

g) Soup & Chatter

Cllr Turner presented a report for the Soup & Chatter programme which will be uploaded to the website (Appendix I). The event continues to be well attended, with around 24 people regularly participating and new attendees joining. Although funding from the Norfolk Community Foundation ended two years ago, the programme has received support from a Secret Santa grant and, more recently, the Potter Heigham Trust, together with voluntary donations. The informal sessions are held on the second and fourth Thursday of each month, with Scrabble proving a popular addition.

h) St Nicolas Church

A report from the Parochial Church Council was presented by Cllr Pickering which will be uploaded to the website (Appendix J). He thanked the Parish Council for its continued support in funding grass cutting at the churchyard. Clearance of undergrowth has enhanced the churchyard, while the established wildflower area continues to expand.

The PCC welcomed the continuation of Rev. Gary Noyes' ministry following the renewal of his contract and highlighted the success of the Benefice outreach project, which brought church activities to riverside communities by Wherry.

The PCC confirmed that its Parish Share of almost £9,000 had been paid and advised that services continue to be shared with Catfield. Advice is being sought on repairs to the leaking chancel thatched roof and south aisle lead roof, although costs are expected to increase following the withdrawal of the VAT concession for churches.

The report also paid tribute to the late Mary Haslam, recognising her many years of dedicated service to the church, including 25 years as Churchwarden, 24 years editing the parish gazette and her lasting legacy of over 150 embroidered kneelers.

i) Potters Mardlers

A report was received from the Potters Mardlers which will be uploaded to the website (Appendix K). Potters Mardlers continues to thrive with 70 members and monthly meetings regularly attended by over 55 members. Meetings provide an opportunity for socialising over refreshments, with additional activities including mini markets, games afternoons, lunches and coach trips.

The group supported the community by providing Christmas hampers for Ludham Surgery to distribute to local care homes and making donations to Breast Cancer Now, the Royal Marines and Potter Heigham Village Hall towards roof repairs. Guest speaker Jane Hagger gave a talk on her life as a Bluebell Girl and members enjoyed a

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visit to Filby Bridge Restaurant. The group also celebrated two member weddings during the year.

j) Potter Heigham Short Bowls Club

A report was received from the Short Mat Bowls Club which will be uploaded to the website (Appendix L). The club continues to meet twice weekly on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The club has 24 members, with four playing outdoor bowls during the summer months. Members have a range of physical abilities and thanks to strong attendance and generous donations, the club has purchased an electric mat winding machine, making the handling of the mats much easier.

k) Potter Heigham Table Tennis Club

An update was received on the local club which will be uploaded to the website (Appendix M). The club continues to thrive with around 20 members and an average weekly attendance of 12. Approximately half the membership are Potter Heigham residents, with the remainder coming from surrounding villages. The club remains focused on providing a friendly, social environment for players of all ages and abilities and occasionally takes part in friendly matches with other local clubs.

**l) Any other reports received from local groups
Stitchers**

A report was received which will be uploaded to the website (Appendix N). The report advised that the group meets every Monday for two hours from 1.30pm to undertake a range of crafts, including embroidery, crochet, knitting and patchwork. Items made are donated to local hospices and the Neonatal Unit at the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital. The group currently has 16 members from Potter Heigham and surrounding villages, including Ludham and welcomes new members.

Potter Heigham County Fair

Cllr Turner encouraged residents to enter the Potter Heigham County Fair (previously known as the Produce & Craft Show).

7. Public Forum

There were no items raised by members of the public

8. Any Other Business

A concern was raised regarding overgrown vegetation at a property where the boundary is disputed. It was advised that the relevant solicitors be contacted, as the legal documentation should clarify the property boundaries.

Meeting closed: 9.01pm

Signed.....(Chair)

Date.....