

Hessett Parish Council

MINUTES

of the meeting on **Tuesday 20th May 2025 at 7.30pm** at Hessett & Beyton Village Hall

Present: Councillors Phil Barrett (Chair), Margaret Shaw, Andrew Pearson

In attendance: Michelle Fisher (Clerk to the Council), Cllr Penny Otton (SCC), Cllr Nickey Willshire (MSDC), three residents.

200525/01 Election of Chairman for 2025/26

Cllr Phil Barrett was elected unanimously as Chairman. There being no other proposals Cllr Phil Barrett was elected as Chairman for Hessett Parish Council.

200525/02 Election of Vice Chair for 2025/26

Cllr Phil Barrett proposed Cllr Margaret Shaw as Vice Chairman and was elected unanimously by all Councillors. There being no other proposals Cllr Margaret Shaw was elected as Vice Chairman of Hessett Parish Council.

200525/03 Signature of Acceptance of Office Forms

The re-elected Chair and Vice Chair signed Declarations of Acceptance of Office. The Parish Councillors signed Acceptance of office declarations for 2025/26.

200525/04 Apologies for absence

Apologies received from Cllr Richard Merryfield.
All Parish Councillors present agree to accept the reasons for apology.

200525/05 Register of Interests Forms

All Councillors confirmed receipt of Register of Interests forms. The clerk confirmed that these must be completed and returned to the clerk as soon as is possible, ideally by the end of the week but not exceeding 28 days.

200525/06 Part 1 Declarations of Interest

- (a) There were no Disclosable Pecuniary Interests Declared
- (b) There were no other Disclosable Interests Declared

200525/07 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 18th March 2025 and Tuesday 14th January 2025 were agreed to be a true record. The Chair was authorised to sign them as such.

200525/08 Public Forum

Hessett PC confirmed receipt of SCC and MSDC.

County & Borough Councillor Reports

Suffolk County Council Cllr Penny Otton

Work continues to transfer staff to Suffolk County Council and finalise details of how friends group and parish council money will be dealt. Cllr Otton has a meeting with Matt Fox of Highways on Thursday to go through any outstanding issues.

Parishes can apply for funding for Bus Stop shelters. The Chair informed Cllr Otton that Hessett does not have any buses. The Vice Chair informed Cllr Otton that Hessett only has a school bus service.

District Councillor Cllr Nicky Willshire

Local Governance and Planning Developments

The interim report, submitted by borough and district councils, suggests that establishing multiple unitary authorities would improve outcomes for residents, enhance economic growth, provide flexible, community-tailored solutions and a consultation process is now open; however, Cllr Willshire expressed disappointment that the consultation includes only closed categories, limiting community input.

Cllr Willshire emphasized the importance of developing and updating Neighbourhood Plans, noting that the absence of a plan leaves Hessett vulnerable to undesirable developments. The Chair inquired about funding options for developing the Neighbourhood Plan. The Clerk confirmed that an inquiry has been sent to the MSDC grants/awards team, but no response has been received yet. Cllr Willshire agreed to follow up on the funding query.

Cllr Willshire confirmed that a Locality Budget is now available to support local initiatives.

Members of the Public

A few residents volunteered to help with the Neighbourhood Plan and two residents expressed interest in becoming Parish Councillors. The Clerk to send an information pack to one resident. The Chair agreed to chat to these residents further on becoming a Parish Councillor and regarding the arrangements for meeting to discuss the Neighbourhood Plan.

Solar Farm Concerns

The Chair questioned both Cllr Otton and Cllr Willshire why Hessett Parish Council was not informed or consulted about the plans for a solar farm on Hessett land. Both Councillors stated that they had no prior knowledge of the proposal and Cllr Willshire will contact the MSDC Planning Team to investigate.

Residents raised concerns about construction traffic related to the solar farm and expressed a desire to restrict access through the village.

Community Facilities

A resident inquired about the goalposts on the village green and both the Chair and the Clerk confirmed that the council is currently evaluating options for new 5-a-side football posts to replace the existing one.

The residents present voiced support for the Neighbourhood Plan, recognizing it as a beneficial tool for managing development. There was a preference for the village to retain some control over the

quantity and type of housing being proposed but also the need for the village to move forward and welcome some change.

200525/09 Planning

- a. All Councillors noted that there are no planning application consultations to consider.
- b. All Councillors noted that there are no decisions relating to Hessett made by MSDC since the last Parish Council meeting.
- c. CIL balance is currently £2473.91
(A further £500 has been earmarked towards the SID camera post leaving £1973.91 CIL funds available).

200525/10 Clerk's Report & Administrative Duties

- a. The Clerk advised that payments made under delegated powers would need to be resolved today. A full list of payments follows (See Finance & Governance 200525/11(d)).
- b. The Clerk confirmed that she had responded to various correspondence.
- c. The Clerk reminded the Parish Council that her Annual Review was due, and the Parish Council elected both the Chair and Cllr Merryfield to conduct the interview at a date to be confirmed.
- d. The Clerk confirmed that an Internal Audit had been booked with SALC on the week 16-20th June 2025.

200525/11 Finance & Governance

- a. All Councillors confirmed receipt of the finance report for the period as supported by bank statements
Bank reconciliation: Cllr Andrew Pearson, as non-bank signatory, confirmed that from 14th January 2025 to 20th May 2025 the Premium account and bank statements reconciled.
- b. Bank reconciliation as presented and agreed to the bank statements for the Community account and the Premium account.
Reserves: Cllr Andrew Pearson confirmed at the meeting that the reserves account reconciles to the bank statements for the period 14th January 2025 to 20th May 2025.

Barclays Premium Account Reconciliation 14th January 2025 to 20th May 2025.

Start Balance	£5,300.62
Gross outgoing payments	£6963.87
Gross Payments Received	£8597.43
End Balance	£6934.18
Bank Statement Balance 20/01/2025	£6934.18

Barclays Community Account Reconciliation (Reserves) 14th January to 20th May 2025.

Start Balance	£17,377.90
Gross outgoing payments (Transfers to Premium Account)	£8,583.00
Gross Payments Received	£7410.38
End Balance	£16,205.28
Bank Statement Balance 01/10/2024	£16,205.28

- c. Councillors confirmed a full schedule of payments, supported by invoices and receipts and agreed to make the following payments by internet transfer:

Payment	Invoice/receipt ref	Amount (£)
Viking	5820210 (Clerk stationary- ink cartridges and printer paper)	117.68
N H Weld Fab Ltd	3458 (To manufacture supply and fit metal mounting frame with twin posts for village sign)	420.00
Clerk wages	Pay for month ending 30 th May 2025	522.65
Clerk Wages	Pay for month ending 30 th June 2025 (to be paid on 30 th June 2025)	522.65
Clerk	Reimbursement for Microsoft 365 for Hessem PC Laptop	84.99
Cllr Andrew Pearson	Reimbursement Petrol for Hessem PC Lawn Mower. Receipt Transaction No: 479805. (Sundry)	23.89

- d. All Councillors resolve to consolidate the following payments made during the period 01/01/2025 to 20/05/2025

Date	Payment	Invoice/receipt ref	Amount (£)
31/03/25	Clerk	Clerk Wages for March	295.39
28/04/25	HMRC	Employer Contribution	15.86
28/04/25	SALC	Invoice No: 29945	262.81
28/04/25	London Hearts T/A	Invoice No: 169324/03/2025 Replacement Pads and New Battery for Defibrillator	310.99
28/04/25	Hessem & Beyton Village Hall	Invoice: 103	33.00
28/04/25	SALC	Invoice: 29667 Payroll service	56.40
30/04/25	Clerk	Clerk Wages	522.65 Returned payment due to insufficient funds
30/04/25	HPC Community a/c to Premium a/c of 1 st Precept instalment	Account transfer	7,083
09/05/25	NEST	Pension	0.21

- e. CIL Funding - £2473.91

(A further £500 of this has been reserved for SID post leaving £1,973.91)

200525/12 Governance

- a. **AGAR** – The report on the year end process was received from the Clerk. All Councillors approved the Annual Governance Statement (AGAR) for the year ended 31/03/2025 in turn confirming the Parish Council have a sound system of internal control. It was resolved for Cllr Phil Barrett (Chair) and Michelle Fisher (Clerk/RFO) to sign section two of the AGAR with those present at the meeting as witness. Part 2 statements were read and agreed. The Council noted that Income and Expenditure were under £25,000pa and therefore resolved to authorise the chair to sign the Exemption Certificate. The council resolved to approve the AGAR Governance Statement at Part 2, section 1 of the Annual Return and the chair and clerk were authorised to sign it. The Council resolved to approve the information provided by the clerk for the Annual Return in Section 2 part 2. The chair and clerk were authorised to sign it. All Councillors approved the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2025 as transposed on section two of the AGAR in turn confirming the statements present the financial position of Hesselton Parish Council for the year ended 31 March 2025. Cllr Phil Barrett signed Section two of the AGAR at the meeting, all Councillors witnessed the Chair and the Clerk sign.
- b. **CIL** – Councillors received a CIL update report from the Clerk and confirmed that some CIL money had been used during the year between 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025. As of 1st April 2024, the total CIL funding was £4620.84 from this £1252.20 was used towards the SID purchase and £894.73 towards the dog bins which leaves £2473.91. A further £500 has been earmarked towards the SID camera post leaving £1973.91 CIL funds available for use during 1st April 2025 until 31st March 2026.
- All Councillors agreed that the CIL funding amount total was £2473.91, of which £1973.91 is left to spend as £500 has been reserved from the CIL fund for SID post. The Clerk and Cllr Phil Barrett signed the Parish CIL Funding Form, and all Councillors agreed and acted as witness.
- c. All Councillors agreed to postpone the appointment of staff until the next meeting and in the interim the following positions will remain the same as previously: (i) Asset Management – Cllr Andrew Pearson (ii) Flooding – Cllr Phil Barrett (iii) Play Equipment & Village Green – Cllr Margaret Shaw (iv) Allotments & Heath – Cllr Andrew Pearson (v) Risk Assessment & Policies – Cllr Margaret Shaw (vi) Road Safety – Cllr Phil Barrett (vii) Footpath Officer – Hesselton PC do not have one & no volunteers (viii) Defibrillator equipment – Cllr Margaret Shaw d. All Councillors agreed to appoint Cllr Andrew Pearson as the Parish Council Representative to Hesselton & Beyton Village Hall.
- d. All Councillors agreed the continuation of the Parish Council subscription to the external body, the Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC: an annual paid subscription).

200525/13 Vacant Seats on Parish

The Councillors agreed to provide an information pack outlining the roles and responsibilities of becoming a Parish Councillor to one resident who attended the

meeting and expressed an interest. Another resident present at the meeting indicated they would speak further with the Chair to gain a better understanding of what the role entails. Additionally, the Councillors resolved to send a letter to all residents inviting expressions of interest from individuals who may possess relevant skills, with the aim of encouraging broader participation—particularly from younger residents—in order to establish a more age-diverse Council.

200525/14 Insurance

The Clerk reviewed the insurance quotes received and presented two options for consideration. The most competitive quote was from Zurich at £500, while The Local Council Insurance quoted £656.33. Both policies offered similar cover; however, The Local Council Insurance included additional cover for events.

As the Parish Council does not currently organise any events, all Councillors agreed to proceed with the more cost-effective option from Zurich. It was noted that events insurance could be obtained separately in the future, should the need arise, at an estimated cost of approximately £160.

200525/15 The Neighbourhood Plan

All Councillors agreed that Hessest needed a Neighbourhood Plan. All Councillors elected the Chair to oversee the development of the plan, and the Chair will place an advert in the Local Parish Magazine asking for volunteers. Once Volunteers are in place a questionnaire will be developed to get the opinions of the residents of Hessest. The Councillors think some development may be good for the village but that residents should have a say in the type and number of homes. The Clerk agreed to further research funding for the Parish Plan.

200525/16 The Solar Farm

The Chair delivered a PowerPoint presentation outlining the proposed plans for the solar farm.

Following the presentation, all Councillors agreed that the Clerk should contact the solar farm company, OPD, to enquire why Hessest Parish Council had not been consulted regarding the plans. The Clerk had previously spoken with the Clerk of Drinkstone Parish Council, who had shared contact details for OPD and forwarded information that had been provided to their council.

HPC has already received correspondence from a local resident raising valid concerns. Both HPC and residents attending the meeting expressed particular concern over potential construction access, specifically the need to avoid construction vehicles passing through the village.

The Parish Council agreed that any concerns raised by residents should be brought to the attention of the relevant planning body for OPD.

Cllr Willshire also agreed to follow up with MSDC regarding why Hessest had not been included in any consultation, as requested by the Chair during the public forum.

Prior to the meeting, the Clerk reviewed the OPD website. According to their contact form, the company plans to submit to planning authorities in early May and is currently still inviting public comments via their website.

200525/17 The Play Park

The Chair and Cllr Pearson are going to review the playpark inspection report and report back to HPC what maintenance should be a priority. Councillors to short list options for replacement 5 Aside Football Posts. The Chair and Cllr Pearson are to continue to look for a contractor to produce replacement boards.

- 200525/18 Defibrillator Maintenance**
All Councillors unanimously agreed to appoint Seal Calibration to carry out maintenance on the defibrillator at a cost of £139 + VAT.
- 200525/19 Village Sign**
All Councillors unanimously agreed to pay NH Weld Fab Ltd £420 for the works carried out on the Village sign.
Cllr Merryfield to update HPC regarding the volunteer who offered to paint the decorative village sign. The Chair and Cllr Pearson to ask Nigel to carry out the other repairs required to the decorative village sign.
- 200525/20 Parish Council Notice Board**
The Chair informed HPC that he had cleaned the glass and washed down the Parish Council Notice Board. It was unanimously agreed that temporary maintenance be carried out by the Chair and Cllr Pearson and for the Clerk to investigate funding to purchase a new one.
- 200525/21 Grass Cutting**
Cllr Pearson informed the Parish Council that the standard of grass cutting by MSDC appears to be lower this year compared to previous years. The Clerk confirmed that she has written to both MSDC and SCC, requesting clarification on which areas they are responsible for cutting and asking for a copy of their cutting schedule.
The Chair recommended that the Clerk also contact the Parish Council's contractor, Top Garden, to request that he inform the Council if any areas have already been cut prior to his visits. The Chair further suggested that Top Garden be asked not to charge if this occurs to avoid unnecessary public expenditure.
All Councillors agreed with this course of action.
- 200525/22 Phone Box/ Information Point**
Cllr Shaw provided an update to the Parish Council on the progress of works to convert the old telephone box into a village information point, in line with the funding requirements set out by Suffolk County Council.
Councillors unanimously agreed to commission a local artist to produce a map of Hesselst for display. All Councillors reviewed the final design and confirmed they were satisfied for it to proceed to print. A maximum budget of £100 was approved for printing costs.
A local fitter has agreed to carry out the installation of fittings within the telephone box. The Clerk requested that any related invoices be forwarded directly to her for processing.
The production of supporting leaflets will be discussed at a future meeting.
- 200525/23 The Heath**
The Chair informed the Parish Council that the farmer had declined to take a hay cut from the Heath due to the presence of dog excrement, which was noted as disappointing.

Cllr Pearson highlighted the need to keep the hedge under control.

The Chair and Cllr Pearson agreed to investigate options for replacement signage to help address these issues.

200525/24 Schedule of Meetings

The council resolved to ratify the following Meeting Dates for 2025/2026:

- Tuesday 22nd July 2025 at 7.30pm
- Tuesday 23rd September 2025 at 7.30pm
- Tuesday 18th November 2025 at 7.30pm
- Tuesday 13th January 2026 at 7.30pm
- Tuesday 24th March 2026 at 7.30pm

Annual Parish Meeting

- Tuesday 19th May 2026 at 7.00pm

Annual Parish Council Meeting

- Tuesday 19th May 2026 at 7.30pm

200525/25 Councillors/Clerk to update PC on any meetings attended

No meetings attended so no update

Next Meeting date confirmed as 22nd July 2025 at 7.30pm.

The Council agreed the following items should be added to the next meeting Agenda

- Appointment of Staff
- Community Development Plan
- Phone box/Information Point
- Playground
- Heath Maintenance

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.20pm

Signed as a true record by authority of the Council
Chair