



Castle Hedingham Parish Council

Claire Waters (Parish Clerk)

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MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF CASTLE HEDINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL, HELD ON MONDAY 13th APRIL 2026, 6.30pm AT CASTLE HEDINGHAM CLUB

Present: Cllrs Allen, Doe, Dover, Foulkes, Hemes, Jones.

In the Chair: Cllr Doe

Clerk: Claire Waters

Also present: BDC Cllr J Beavis & Cllr W Taylor to item 7

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Southgate, Cllr Mowle & Cllr Smith apologised for absence.

1.1 RESOLVED: In the absence of Cllr Southgate, Cllr Doe was elected to chair the meeting

Proposed: Cllr Foulkes

Seconded: Cllr Allen

Agreed unanimously

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting on 9th March 2026 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

Proposed: Cllr Dover

Seconded: Cllr Hemes

Agreed unanimously

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

4. PUBLIC FORUM

None

5. PROGRESS CHECK

Village maintenance issues and update on actions from last meeting

5.1 Community Litter Pick: Thanks were expressed to everyone who supported our litter pick on the morning of Sunday 29th March, with a total of 23 people including accompanied children litter picking almost all the roads in the village, the Village Park and some footpaths. Locations where fly tipping was found were reported to Braintree District Council.

5.2 Village Park: The RoSPA annual play inspection is booked for May. Regular safety checks continue to be carried out by Village Maintenance, and the basket swing has recently been dismantled and checked for wear on the shackles. The sandpit has been topped up with two tonne bags of play sand.

6. HIGHWAYS & PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

6.1 Road closures: Nunnery Street, 27th April 2026 for 3 days while Anglian Water undertakes chamber replacement works. One Network link: <https://one.network/?tm=GB148033344> Also road closure at

Bayley Street, 22nd to 24th April 2026, for Anglian Water connection <https://one.network/?GB145118453>

6.2 Church Lane: Cllr Dover reported on a test strip dug in the grass bank by church wall which is narrowing the road width and causing difficulty with parking. It is not practical to remove the whole bank but it can be reduced in width, although the road surface beneath will be uneven. **Action** Cllr Dover will organise volunteers to clear away a strip at the road edge, with soil removed to the churchyard. A risk assessment will be provided to the clerk.

6.3 Majendie Lane: Confirmation received from NEPP that the primrose lines will be repainted. The H-bar is no longer supported by Essex Highways for reinstatement and would need to be paid for by the resident.

6.4 Byway 27: A large delivery of used road planings has been delivered by Essex Highways for filling holes on the byway from Rushley Green to Kirby Hall Rd. The Philp family are thanked for spreading the planings.

7. REPORTS

7.1 Police/Neighbourhood Watch. New monthly Community Safety advice from our Police Liaison officer is published on our website news feed. <https://castlehedingham-pc.gov.uk/category/news/> Residents can sign up to receive news automatically at <https://castlehedingham-pc.gov.uk/> . Weekly Neighbourhood Watch newsletters are published at <https://castlehedingham-pc.gov.uk/neighbourhood-watch-police/>

7.2 Essex CC report – Cllr Schwier apologised for absence due to conflicting meetings.

7.3 Braintree DC reports –Cllr Taylor reported:

- Kirby Hall Rd planning application will be decided by BDC Planning Committee on 21st April. The case officer's report recommends refusal. The clerk reported that an Anglian Water fault report for the Nunnery Street pumping station received in response to an information request from Cllr Southgate had been forwarded to the case officer. Cllr Taylor and Cllr Southgate will speak at the Planning Committee meeting. Cllr Beavis reported:
- BDC Local Plan consultation ends on 17th April, all comments will be taken into account.
- Concerns continue about bin changes and she has been able to support people in resolving problems.
- Local Government Reorganisation: A government minister for Essex is involved with the creation of the new North East Essex Council (NEEC) which will replace BDC & ECC and include Braintree, Colchester and Tendring. May 2027 are the elections for this new Unitary Council and appointments will be for 5 years. Councillors elected in May 2026 will serve for 2 years, with the second year acting as Unitary Authority shadow Councillors to assist the transition. The whole process could take at least a decade.
- Medical Centre: A meeting will take place with the CEO of One Medical on 15th April. A complete financial review is being carried out but the project has not been cancelled. Parish Councillors raised concerns about continued delays, including their impact on the lease of the surgery at Falcon Square. *Cllrs Beavis & Taylor left the meeting*

8. PLANNING

Please see: <https://castlehedingham-pc.gov.uk/planning-applications/>

BDC Local Plan Review – Regulation 18 consultation: To agree a Parish Council response to this public consultation on whether the Local Plan Review document and Sustainability Appraisal are sound. No sites are approved for development in Castle Hedingham: <https://braintree-consult.objective.co.uk/kse/>

Comment: support decision on no allocation of sites in Castle Hedingham. Comment to include reference to infrastructure, roads, medical centre, school capacity and village services

Applications received: to include any received after publication of the agenda

26/00769/TPOCON Notice of intent to carry out works to trees in a Conservation Area: Sequoia (T1) Fell the tree to a stump-The tree is located very close to the boundary wall and neighbouring garage. The wall has moved and will continue to get worse, if the tree is left.

Binghams Pottery Lane CO9 3EU *Comment: no photo provided and tree cannot be seen from the road. Bird nesting season needs to be taken into consideration.*

26/00608/FUL & 26/00609/LBC Conversion and change of use of the Grade II* listed building known as 'Castle Hedingham United Reform Church' to form 3 No. dwellings

United Reformed Church 32 Queen Street CO9 3HA *Objection Comment: Lack of respect for heritage asset and listed internal features. Parking space issue for 3 separate properties*

26/00476/HH & 26/00477/LBC - Proposed single storey rear extension and replacement of the front door, along with replacing the sashes to the existing first floor frames.

3 Falcon Square CO9 3BT *No comment but support specialist heritage advice*

Applications determined

26/00026/TPOCON Notice of intent to carry out works to trees in a Conservation Area: Ornamental Plum (T1) Crown reduction of 2m in height and up to 1m of lateral spread

30 Church Ponds CO9 3BZ *No objections raised*

9. FINANCE

9.1 The monthly bank reconciliations were checked and signed by Cllr Jones. The monthly payments were approved for authorisation

Proposed: Cllr Foulkes

Seconded: Cllr Doe

Agreed unanimously

9.2 Annual Accounts: The full year end Accounting reports for 2025-2026 will soon be published on the website and presented at the Annual Parish Assembly on Thursday 30th April.

9.3 Npower invoices: Councillors gave their approval for the clerk to refer the matter to the Energy Ombudsman, since Npower have at last agreed there are no charges owed for energy use but are now claiming a £50 to £55 per month standing charge since June 2025 for 4 street lights at New Park that are not connected to the electricity supply. One quote from an alternative supplier for re-energising the street lights had been received. A quote from a second supplier had not yet been received. Energy suppliers are not keen to take on such a small account. Councillors also approved the clerk investigating the cost of permanent disconnection of the street lights, if this is the only way to avoid standing charges.

9.4 Pump House Rates: An increase of nearly 100% in the rates for the Pump House for 2026-2027, from £58.35 to £114.92, has been challenged at the Valuation Office Agency but with no success so far. The building is listed as a “ground floor changing room” in the same category as Village Halls & Scout Huts.

Action: Clerk to raise another query, but in the meantime the April and May rates were approved for payment

9.5 Local Government Pay review: It was noted the National Local Government Employers have made a “full and final offer of 3.30%” for the 2026 pay settlement. This will guide the pay review when finalised.

10. AUDIT & GOVERNANCE 2025-2026

10.1 Internal Auditor: The internal audit date of Monday 27th April 2026 was noted

10.2 Annual Governance and Accountability Review (AGAR): It was confirmed with Councillors how they can access the documents online to review the AGAR requirements, including Assertion 10 documents and website accessibility reports. Approval of the Annual Return documents will be an agenda item for the Annual Parish Council meeting in May. Once approved these will be published on the website.

11. ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY THURSDAY 30TH APRIL 2026

The Annual Parish Assembly will start at 7pm at the Memorial Hall. Castle Hedingham Club bar will be open and light refreshments will be served in the Village Hall, with display tables available for village groups and organisations. The meeting will start at 7.30pm. This is not a formal Parish Council meeting and all residents are encouraged to attend to share news or raise matters of interest.

12. PUBLIC TOILETS

12.1 Timed Access Locks: The supplier Danfo confirms installation is booked for 19th - 21st May.

RESOLVED: To make an additional donation of £100 to St Nicholas Church as thanks to the Church keyholder volunteers who have been locking and unlocking the public toilets in the meantime.

Proposed: Cllr Doe

Seconded: Cllr Allen

Agreed unanimously

12.2 Cleaner vacancy: 3 quotes from self-employed contractors/commercial cleaners were reviewed.

RESOLVED: To appoint Mark Watkins of Dirt Aid cleaning from Sudbury. He plans to clean weekly on Mondays and Fridays, probably before the public toilets open at 9am.

Proposed: Cllr Dover

Seconded: Cllr Doe

Agreed unanimously

13. ST JAMES FAIR, SATURDAY 25th JULY 2pm - 5pm

Cllr Dover confirmed arrangements so far, including use of the church for teas and indoor stalls, the Village Park for tents/gazebos and games, the Club bar for drinks. Indoor uses for the hall are still being considered. Most stallholders from last year have confirmed they will return. New participants and stallholders are welcome to contact Cllr Dover on wildd@castlehedingham-pc.gov.uk **Action:** Clerk to organise renewal of lottery licence and raffle tickets, grass cutting etc. Further arrangements including food/BBQ to be confirmed.

14. CORRESPONDENCE TO NOTE:

Local Government Reorganisation: 5 unitary authorities will be created in Greater Essex, details at <https://www.essexlgrhub.org/changes-coming-greater-essex>

Essex Safeguarding Adults Board: Introductory letter from Chair, including links to training and guidance in the event of an adult safeguarding concern. <https://www.essexsab.org.uk/guidance-policies-and-protocols>

Essex Association of Local Councils: Appointment of new CEO Stephanie Robinson and Membership Update April 2026

15. AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

- Election of Chair
- Review of Councillor roles and responsibilities
- Internal Audit report
- AGAR – Annual Governance and Accountability Review
- Parish Council insurance, asset and risk registers

16. NEXT MEETINGS

Thursday 30th April 2026	7.00pm	ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY	VILLAGE HALL
Monday 11th May 2026	6.30pm	Annual Parish Council	Castle Hedingham Club
Monday 8th June 2026	6.30pm	Ordinary Parish Council	Castle Hedingham Club
Monday 13th July 2026	6.30pm	Ordinary Parish Council	Castle Hedingham Club

The meeting closed at 7.47pm

SIGNED (CHAIRMAN)

DATE

Appendix 1: Financial Report

PAYMENTS AND RECEIPTS FOR AUTHORISATION April 2026

Apr-26	Payments in Month	Details	Amount
	Npower	Electricity Street lights disputed	
DD	Octopus Energy	Electricity toilets	£19.81
DD	Peoples Partnership	Peoples Pension	TBC
B/P	E C Waters	Home as Office	£75.00
B/P	E C Waters	Office Expenses	£45.76
B/P	Staff	Salaries	TBC
B/P	MD Landscapes	Grass cutting March	£601.20
B/P	BDC	Rent Pump House & Land	£30.00
B/P	BDC	Rates Pump House & Land April	£15.92
B/P	BDC	Rates Pump House & Land May	£11.00
B/P	CH Club	April meeting	£20.00
B/P	Darkins	Community Allotment	£23.89
B/P	Darkins	Village Maintenance	£3.30
B/P	Garry Southgate	Combination lock	£13.69
B/P	P M Smith	Payroll Jan Feb Mar	£61.20
B/P	P M Smith	Year end and P60s 2025-26	£36.00
B/P	EALC	EALC & NALC Affiliation Fee	£413.95
B/P	Open Spaces Society	Annual Subscription	£45.00
B/P	Rentokil Initial	Sanitary Disposal Toilets	£20.02
B/P	St Nicholas Church PCC	Keyholder support Public Toilets	£100.00
TOTAL in month			£1,535.74

Apr-26	Receipts in Month	Details	Amount
	None		
TOTAL in month			£0.00

Accounts balances at 13th April 2026

Unity Trust Current account	£4,148.83
Unity Trust Deposit account 1.95%	£16,812.00
Cambridge & Counties 95 day notice 3.30%	£39,307.20
TOTAL RESERVES	£60,268.03
Of which:	
Historic Village Centre infrastructure reserve	£17,988.18
Community Projects reserve	£7,271.00
Public Toilet reserve	£1,610.79
Village Park reserve	£2,000.00
Cemetery infants area memorial	£1,650.00
Community Allotment petty cash held at bank	£179.76
GENERAL RESERVE (50% of precept is advised)	£29,568.30

Interest 2025-26

N/A

S106 funding remaining at BDC (until 31.5.2030) £27.29

RECONCILED PAYMENTS & RECEIPTS March 2026

Mar-26	Payments in Month	Details	Amount
	Npower	Electricity Street lights disputed	
DD	Octopus Energy	Electricity toilets	£17.48
DD	Wave	Water Cemetery	£20.61
DD	Wave	Water Toilets	£83.43
DD	Peoples Partnership	Peoples Pension	£77.85
DD	ICO	Registration renewal 2026-2027	£47.00
B/P	E C Waters	Home as Office	£75.00
B/P	E C Waters	Office Expenses	£33.17
B/P	Staff	Salaries	£1,883.92
B/P	HMRC	Tax/NI February month 11 2611	£573.16
B/P	A Redgewell	Village Maintenance support	£68.51
B/P	CH Club	Extra Feb & March meeting	£40.00
B/P	Darkins	Village Maintenance & Allotment	£25.96
B/P	Hedingshams Parish Mag	Minutes Dec/Jan Feb Mar	£214.03
B/P	CouncilWise	Annual Subscription	£180.00
B/P	Silverton Ltd	Play sand for Village Park	£204.00
	Unity Trust	Service Charge	£7.00
TOTAL in month			£3,551.12

Mar-25	Receipts in Month	Details	Amount
16-Mar	Harvey Darke	EROB 304 & Interment 27 Feb	£455.00
31-Mar	Harvey Darke	Additional Inscription Grave 250	£105.00
31-Mar	Evans	EROB 15 transfer/scatter ashes	£260.00
TOTAL in month			£820.00