

MINUTES OF HUNSTON AGM

TUESDAY 20TH MAY 2025

There were 15 members of the village in attendance in addition to the Chair (JWT), Treasurer (MDT) and Clerk (MWT)

Apologies received from Isabel Cockayne, the O Reillys, Myrams, Dartnells, Wades, Claire DT, Jo Abnett, Andy Morgan, Christine D

The Minutes of the AGM 2024 had already been approved at Meeting on 7 October 2024

Report from the Chair

There was nothing to report for the purposes of the AGM and other matters would be addressed in the Ordinary Meeting to follow the AGM

Report from Treasurer

MDT took the meeting through the financial statements, which had previously been circulated and posted on the village website. Save noting that the costs of the biodiversity day had to a large extent been covered by a grant from Mid Suffolk District Council, there were no comments on the accounts. MDT explained the statements in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return and the following resolutions were put to the meeting and passed unanimously.

1. that the accounts fairly present the financial position of the Parish Meeting for the year ended 31 March 2025
2. the Annual Governance Statement 2024/25 in the Treasurer's report are approved
3. that as we satisfy the qualifying criteria and as our annual gross income and gross expenditure for the year to 31 March 2025 was respectively £25,000 or less, Hunston Parish Meeting is exempt from a limited assurance review under Section 9 of the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015 and hence that we authorise the completion and signing of the Certificate of Exemption.
4. that the commencement date for the exercise of public rights be set as Monday 9th June 2025 and that from that date until Friday 18th July 2025 inclusive the accounts and accounting records will be available for public inspection.

5. Election of Officers

JWT said that MDT had agreed to stand again as Treasurer and MWT would stand as Clerk in the absence of any other offers but that there would be a discussion as to succession planning in the Ordinary Meeting to follow this one. JWT then explained that some time had been spent trying to resolve the question of how best to find a successor to both Chair and Clerk and to spread the work of, in particular, the Clerk but without much success although Alan Clark had kindly offered general support. In the circumstances and because of his other commitments he did not feel able to continue as Chair. The main issue raised by

the lack of a Chair was that it raised the question of the continued ownership of the Parish Cottage as the Chair, together with the Proper Officer of MSDC are the joint owners of the Cottage. JWT said that MWT was very happy not to stand as Clerk if an incoming Chair preferred to have a different clerk. JWT then opened to the meeting a discussion of how to resolve the situation. MWT said she felt that the Parish Cottage was an integral part of the village and, if absolutely unavoidable, she would stand as chair to avoid questions arising over the Cottage. She also said she felt that it was not ideal to have a couple as chair and Clerk, particularly in the absence of a wider committee structure. MWT said she recognised that everyone had commitments which made taking on Parish roles difficult. Although no one came forward to stand as Chair or Clerk offers of help with specific areas were made. In particular

- David Cox will take on the 40 mph speed reduction project,
- Neil Margereson is happy to be involved in devolution matters but not to take charge of this

Following discussion and clarifying that the rules governing Parish Meetings allow a Chair to resign and a new chair to be appointed before the following AGM JWT agreed to stand again.

Votes were then taken and the following were unanimously elected for another year.

Chair – JWT

Treasurer – MDT

Clerk – MWT

The AGM closed at 6.55 pm

MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF

HUNSTON PARISH MEETING

20TH MAY 2025

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Apologies received from Isabel Cockayne, the O Reillys, Myrams, Dartnells, Wades, Claire DT, Jo Abnett, Andy Morgan. Christine D

Report from Richard Winch District Councillor

RW went through the latest District Council report which had been circulated prior to the meeting and answered questions particularly relating to devolution. He confirmed

that there will be no public vote on any of the proposals but that the District Council will be submitting its views to central government in September. Confirmed that whereas the County Council preferred a single unitary authority the District Councils were in favour of 2 or 3 authorities which would better reflect the different areas and sectors of Suffolk, their differing needs and priorities as well as maintaining a better degree of local connection.

MSDC were working as financially efficiently as possible and to reflect this and in particular the squeeze on household budgets had frozen its element of council tax this year. The Council has 2 years to run until the system changes and its priorities are to get as much done in the time available concentrating on

Town and village improvements, in particular Stowmarket

Sports facilities

Arts and Culture

Biodiversity including buying land for community use

Planning and Housing. – Government is looking for a 37% increase in housebuilding and this inevitably is going to have an impact in the area. CIL provides money for some infrastructure projects but there is still a problem with the bigger issues such as surgeries and schools.

he Minutes of the Meeting of 17th March 2025 were approved unanimously

Matters arising

- Cottage repairs. JWT explained that there was real difficulty in getting builders to quote for work on Listed properties, particularly regular maintenance so it had not been possible to get two quotes for the work that was anticipated for the cottage. The repairs were
Repairs to internal lintel - £340
Lime wash to West end gable - £2,604
Damp in East Wall - £2,136 - £6,876 (depending on the extent of work needed)
JWT said item 1 was essential and probably item 2, as the view of the Cottage Committee was that they should keep on top of maintenance rather than waiting until repairs became essential and, therefore, probably more expensive.
Damp – Rickards were going to do proper damp readings before advising what needed to be done, including possible work to existing French drain. The total cost of works could therefore be up to £10,000 inclusive of VAT. David Johnson raised the question of whether we could reclaim the VAT on these works and MDT offered to investigate the position as VAT could not generally be reclaimed by Parish Meetings.

A vote was then taken and the Meeting agreed unanimously that the Cottage Committee could authorise works up to a total of £10,000 incl VAT.

- End of War Celebration

Confirmed that this would take place on 2 August at Walnut Tree Cottage and that invitations had gone out.

A vote was taken and it was agreed that the a budget of up to £1250 be made available for this event.

- Parish Walk

Andy Morgan was kindly organising this. It will happen on Saturday 24th May meeting at the Village Sign at 10 am. Andy Morgan will post further details on the helpline. MWT agreed to circulate an email for those who are not on the helpline.

- Traffic

We are still pursuing a 40 mph reduction. The police Mobile Safety Camera team now come twice a month and will start including monitoring outside Tudor House as well as at the Badwell Ash end of the village.

The speed watch team have done 126 sessions since October 2023 and captured 625 speeding vehicles. Agreed this was an amazing team effort.

New Proposals for Parish Meeting Officers

There is a proposal that people be invited to shadow the Chair, Treasurer and Clerk positions to see what they involved and then hopefully feel confident about taking over in due course. Isabel Cockayne has offered to shadow the clerk/chair role and this was hugely welcomed by the Meeting. There is also the potential to consider a time restriction on office holding so that people do not feel they will be permanently in post. This would be discussed at the next meeting.

Review of Parish banking arrangements

JWT said it was sensible to review the arrangements periodically and as we now had about £30,000 in reserves this seemed an appropriate time. The options were to continue to keep reserves in a savings account protected by the FCSC but look for the best available option and/or consider investing some of the reserves in the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund, details of which had been circulated. MDT took the meeting through the pros and cons of the CCLA Fund.

It was proposed that a finance committee be set up to review the options and then advise the next Parish Meeting. Several people have volunteered for this role and the following were appointed unanimously in addition to the Chair and Treasurer , Isabel Cockayne, David Cox, Mike Wyllie. The following resolution was passed unanimously.

That the finance committee consider all available financial options for the Parish Reserves and report to the next Parish Meeting for a decision to be made on investment.

- **The Church**

Matthew DT reported that progress is being made with the plans for providing water and electricity to the church, and that fundraising had begun. He thanked, in particular, David Johnson and his family for being so helpful in our negotiations with UK Power and others.

AOB

David Johnson advised that the Cheddite Clay Pigeon Shoot will be happening this Sat, Sun Monday between 8.30 – 5 (possibly later on Monday). He invited everyone to come and visit the event.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 8 pm