MINUTES OF A THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF HOLYWELL-CUM-NEEDINGWORTH HELD ON TUESDAY 21st APRIL 2026 AT 6.30pm at Millfield's Pavilion, Mill Way, Needingworth

PRESENT:
Cllr A Whyte (Chairman)
10 Parish Councillors
HDC J Neish
HDC P Hodgson-Jones
R Fountain - VHT
No members of the public
Miss J Bowd (Parish Clerk)

1. Apologies for Absence.
   Cllr N Dyne
   Cllr D Jackson
   Cllr E McNeill
   CCC A Bulat

2. Minutes of the 2025 Annual Parish Meeting
   The Minutes of the 2025 Annual Meeting were signed as a true and correct record.
   (Prop Cllr Whyte 2nd Cllr MacPherson) 8 in favour,2 abstentions
3. Chairman's Report.
   The Chairman of the Parish Council's report attached as Appendix A
   No Questions were asked.

4. To receive questions relating to reports from the following local organisations / bodies (submitted reports can be found on the Parish Council website)
   - CCC (Appendix B)
     Cllr A Bulat report submitted in absence.
   - HDC-Both District Councillors read out reports (Appendix C)
     Clarification was sought as to the acronym CAPCA. This was identified as Cambridge & Peterborough combined authority.
     District Cllr Neish was asked if civil parking enforcement officers
   - Needingworth Village Hall Trust Report.
     Mr R Fountain read out a report from the Trust. (Appendix D)
   - Relief in Need Charity
     Clerk read out the following:
     Closing statement.

     Closing Balance £865.40

     Charity was closed by the Trustees on 3rd July 2025.

     Balance of funds was split equally between

     Huntingdon Volunteer Centre & St Ives foodbank.

     Report to be written by Church trustee and printed in the Villager.

5. Financial Report of the Council.

   <u>Figures for year ending 31st March 2025.</u>

   Please note: These figures were prepared on Income & Expenditure basis. Figures rounded to neared pound.

   Income £ 176767

DRAFT

Expenditure £190836.

£274052.carried forward as general and allocated reserves.

CIL earmarked reserve £131836.

General reserve £43000.00

Internal audit carried out by CAPALC Ltd 1st May 2025.

External auditors appointed PKF Littlejohn LLP.

The Parish Councils Annual Report published by 30th September 2025.

Precept for financial year 2025/26. £141203.00

This equates to a band D property paying £128.18 per annum – £4.15 per annum increase on a Band D which equates to 3.28% increase on 2024/25

Both audit reports are available to view on the Parish Council website.

Draft figures for year ending 31st March 2026.

Please note:

These figures have been prepared on Income & Expenditure basis.

The accounts have not yet been presented to or approved by council this will be done on 5th May 2026.

From the bank reconciliation:

Income £ 173345

Expenditure £214357

£234308 carried forward as general and allocated reserves.

CIL earmarked reserve £81518.00

General reserve £43000.00

Internal audit will be carried out by CAPALC Ltd 27th April 2026.

External auditors appointed PKF Littlejohn LLP.

The Parish Councils Annual Report will be published by 30th September 2026.

Precept for new financial year 2026/27. £148012.00

This equates to a band D property paying £134.18 per annum – £6.00 per annum increase on a Band D which equates to 4.6 % increase on 2025/26.

6. **Public Open Forum.**
   None

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.00pm

Chairman

Date

DRAFT

APPENDIX A

Good evening and welcome to the Annual Parish Meeting for 2025/26.

The Parish Council welcomed back Cllr Sue Martin, who was co-opted back onto the Council in August 2025. This was the only change to the Council this year.

Planning Issues

Both villages are still classified as small settlements.

We have dealt with 33 planning applications this year.

The land north of Lodel Farm, Overcote Lane was passed for up to 30 affordable dwellings.

Projects and achievements

In May we held the VE Day 80 event in the village hall with entertainment from the era provided by the group 'Through the Decades' and ended the evening with the lighting of the beacon. On Friday 15th August we laid a wreath at the War Memorial to mark VJ Day 80.

Remembrance Day was marked on Sunday 9th November which was well attended. Thank you to the yarn bombers for the displays of knitted poppies and other items around the villages and thank you to the volunteers who helped with the road closures on the day.

The planters at the village hall were painted and replanted and we also planted a few more trees on the playing field.

Once again the Christmas tree was erected on Pound Hill. This year the lights were sponsored by Needingworth Self Store.

We held a stall at the Christmas bazaar in the village hall. This gave Councillors the opportunity to engage with residents about the potential change within Local Government and the new Local Plan. Thank you to everyone who helped on the day.

We held a 20mph residents speed survey and as there was no overwhelming majority either way the Council resolved not to apply to CCC Highways for a 20mph scheme at this time.

The Council have applied for a Local Highways Improvement Bid to Cambridgeshire County Council for traffic calming measures at the Bluntisham Road entrance to the village as you leave the A1123 and we are still waiting for the developer to install the bus shelters along Bluntisham Road.

The fire hooks have now been restored and replaced on the wall on the High Street near Silver Lane.

Huntingdonshire District Council supplied us with pink recycling bins for waste electrical and electronic equipment or WEEE for short, these are located at Overcote Lane playing field car park next to the notice board.

The under 12's play area has been resurfaced with wet pour; this is a great improvement to the play area.

We have started negotiations with Cambridgeshire County Council to purchase the Falklands and Engineers Wood.

Finally, thank you to the Parish Council staff for all of their hard work over the past year and thank you to the Parish Councillors for giving up their time to enable the Parish to improve and maintain the facilities of the villages.

Also, as elections are to be held on 7th May 2026, thank you to those Councillors who have decided not to re stand, or cannot re stand, for their work over the past 4 years and good luck to all those who have submitted nomination papers seeking election.

DRAFT

APPENDIX B

Report for Annual Holywell-cum-Needingworth Parish Council – 21 April 2026

Alex Bulat, County Councillor St Ives South and Needingworth

Please accept my apologies for not being able to attend this meeting in person. This short update is an overview of the year as well as some highways updates since my last report for the April PC meeting.

Since I was elected as County Councillor for St Ives South and Needingworth in May 2025, I have tried to be as active and accessible on local issues. My thanks go to the Chatters Cafe volunteers who welcomed me to do my monthly surgeries there as well as to Parish Councillors who have asked me questions about county council issues during the monthly meetings where I provided a report.

A key focus of the year has been highways matters. I am on the Highways Committee but in opposition, so although I do not have the same influence as being in administration, I always ensure that local issues are highlighted and also challenge some of the administration's decisions. In particular, I have been vocal on the management of the highways contract and the need for accountability on poor repairs, and making the case to bring more maintenance services in house like they used to be.

There is some good news on some issues that we pushed for – approving a project to improve pedestrian safety and footpaths at Mill Way, Morrisons to Bluntisham will have preparation works in 2026-2027 and then resurfacing the year after, and a number of projects in St Ives such as Needingworth Road included for full resurfacing this financial year. On local highways matters, I have represented residents' concerns and feedback on the cycle path as well as the toucan crossing projects as they progressed this year. I have been constantly reporting highways faults and some will be repaired soon – there will be road closures in the next weeks on Overcote Lane (29 April), Harris Crescent (1 May) and Back Lane (24 April) to repair the potholes that have been marked – hopefully with more to come as the weather is now ideal for repairs.

Overall, on the county council, I continue to be an active opposition member, speaking about the issues that matter to residents, from busway works, to advocating to continue free school meals during holidays, to the need to improve social care. I worked cross-party and supported Option E for an independent Huntingdonshire part of the local government consultation reorganisation and was vocal against the Lib Dem administration's preferred option to merge us with Peterborough and Fenland. I also worked with other county councillors to oppose some proposals part of the A141 consultation, such as the Meadow Lane bus gate which has now been removed from the proposals following feedback. I am part of various committees, including the RFCC, where I speak about flood mitigation and raise residents' concerns. I attend a number of external appointments as well on behalf of CCC, including Young Farmers. Please do

get in touch if I can support with any county council issue at alex.bulat@cambridgeshire.gov.uk.

DRAFT

APPENDIX C

Report to Annual Parish Council – 2025-26

This has been the fourth year of the Joint Administration at Huntingdonshire District Council. There have been some changes within the groups forming the Joint Administration, with several individual councillors changing party colours.

As we approach the elections on 7th May, there is a real prospect of change, but the shape of the new administration won't be known until we see what finally emerges after the count.

Key highlights from the past year are set out below:

- Local Government Reorganisation: This issue has dominated matters at the Council ever since it was first raised in December 2024. Apart from creating uncertainty and confusion over whether there would be elections this year, which your Conservative Councillors voted unanimously to retain, it has consumed an enormous amount of Officer / Councillor time. This has detracted from HDC's ability to progress other important activities.
- Council Finances / Budget: Despite claims of a "financial black hole" used by the administration to justify the Green Bin Tax and increasing Council Tax by the maximum permitted each year, the Council's financial position remains strong, with the Council reporting a small net surplus each year and accumulating significant reserves.
- Council workload: Thanks to the distraction caused by LGR, most meeting agendas have been light, especially in DMC, and the Scrutiny committees are not functioning effectively. There has been some improvement on the Corporate Governance Committee where colleagues and I reviewed the Council's constitution. We recommended various changes to council procedures and terms of reference for committees, some of which have already been implemented. These are intended to make the Council more efficient.
- Transport Infrastructure: CCC had put the proposed A141 relief road project on hold pending a review based on "sustainable transport" policies - which includes a presumption against new roads. A "consultation" event was held in St Ives to outline the revised proposals, including new restrictions in and around St Ives. It was difficult to perceive how these proposals would relieve congestion on Harrison Way, which would only get worse if more homes are built in the area. Meanwhile, the CPCA Mayor has significantly increased his precept to fund new bus routes, but with no detail as yet on what benefits might accrue to villages in rural areas. Conversely, the Greater Cambridge Partnership has not progressed its proposed road charging system in Cambridge city centre.
- CPCA: In June I was elected Vice-Chairman of the CPCA Audit & Governance Committee. The Committee has met with Mayor to discuss financing and controls for Bus Franchising as well as reviewing elements of the cPCA Constitution ahead of LGR.
- Needingworth Quarry: There had been a hiatus in meetings of the liaison group following change of ownership, but meetings have now resumed on a regular basis. I attended a recent visit to the operations on the south side of the Ouse and saw the remediation work being undertaken to prepare blocks converted to nature reserves to be managed by the RSPB.

Cllr Paul Hodgson-Jones
Holywell-cum-Needingworth Ward (including Blun□sham Colne & Earith)
Huntingdonshire District Council

DRAFT

Annual Parish Meeting 2026

Reflecting on our year as your Holywell cum Needingworth Ward Councillors

As 7th May 2026 approaches, preparations for the local District Council elections are well underway, with residents considering the current council's record and future for Huntingdonshire.

The coalition of parties currently running the District Council have faced ongoing challenges in managing local affairs, resulting in only limited success over the past year, and its full tenure!

Finance

The District Council continues to maintain very healthy financial reserves, which have been further bolstered this year. However, this increase in reserves has come primarily from the unfortunate rise in council tax, rather than through efficiency savings or new revenue streams. Whilst the stability of the council's finances is an important safeguard for local services, it remains a matter of concern that residents are bearing a greater financial burden to achieve this.

Within Huntingdon District Council, the decision to increase council tax has been presented as necessary to maintain service resilience and prepare for future uncertainties. Yet, the accumulation of reserves under these circumstances highlights a tension between prudent financial management and the immediate impact on household budgets across the district.

Local Government Reorganisation

The ongoing local government reorganisation (LGR) for Huntingdonshire aims to streamline council structures and improve the delivery of local services, though its full impact on residents and ward-level decision-making is yet to be determined. As you may be aware we are pushing for an option to run Huntingdonshire as a unitary authority. The Government will decide.

Food Waste

The District Council has also introduced a new food waste recycling scheme across Huntingdonshire, designed to enhance sustainable waste management and reduce the volume of material sent to landfill.

Planning

The 'tilted balance' on planning now impacts Huntingdon District Council's local planning authority because the current Government has increased housing targets for new dwellings from about 800 to over 1,200 per year. This significant increase will put a lot of pressure on local planning and infrastructure, so the council needs to look at land availability, transport links and essential community services. Roads like the A1123, which are already busy, are now under even more scrutiny, and there are growing concerns about flood management and how well existing facilities can handle the extra demand. Getting these higher targets without making life worse for residents is still a big challenge for the council.

Over 2,500 new houses could be built in our ward alone under the New Local Plan for Huntingdonshire. This significant expansion comes from landowners offering sites in our area for development.

The ongoing A141 improvement scheme has been a central focus in addressing local an area transport pressures; however, it will not provide relief to St Ives and the surrounding areas, with congestion and access issues increasing. Continued monitoring and engagement with relevant authorities remain essential to ensure that future interventions deliver meaningful improvements to local infrastructure and traffic flow.

DRAFT

Flooding

I have also been supporting the addressing of the flooding at Earith Bridge to find a suitable solution that will greatly benefit the community by preventing the disruptive road closures and maintaining safe, reliable travel.

Parking Enforcement

Civil parking enforcement has now been successfully implemented across Huntingdonshire, bringing notable advantages such as improved traffic flow, reduced illegal parking, and enhanced safety for both pedestrians and drivers.

Conclusion

Overall, it has been a demanding year. In addition to managing substantial casework, I have taken on a number of significant responsibilities, including:

- Serving as Vice Chair of the Combined Authority Scrutiny Panel, where I led a review into public transport initiatives, helping to shape recommendations for more reliable local services.
- Participating as a senior member of the Development Management Committee, where I contributed to key planning decisions that supported sustainable growth and protected the character of our communities.
- Holding a position as a member of the Shadow Cabinet, where I worked collaboratively to scrutinise council policies and advocate for residents' interests.

These roles, along with various other commitments, have enabled me to represent our ward's needs and ensure local voices are heard in decision-making.

This may be my last Annual Parish meeting as your ward councillor. Looking back, I have thoroughly enjoyed the privilege of serving as your ward councillor for the past eight years.

Jon Neish

Holywell-cum-Needingworth District Ward Councillor.

DRAFT

APPENDIX D

Needingworth Village Hall Chair's Report for Parish Council – April 2026

The Needingworth Village Hall Trust (VHT) Management Committee (MC) currently consists of nine members, seven of whom are Trustees. At the MC's first meeting following the 2025 AGM, Debbie Williams and Adrian Dobbyne were re-elected as Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively. Mark Hebert was re-elected as Secretary, and Ian Madden continues as Treasurer. All other existing Trustees were also re-elected, with Jane Banks and Helen Perryman remaining in their roles as Booking Secretary and Cleaner, respectively.

After the 2025 AGM, nearly all Trustees indicated their intention to step down at the end of their term in May 2026. The MC sought guidance from CambsACRE to understand the implications of this situation and to explore options for keeping the hall open and accessible to the community. Discussions were held with the Parish Council regarding the management of the Village Hall, and both organizations collaborated closely to identify a new team of volunteers to run the charity. Consequently, a new Village Hall Management Committee will take over at the AGM on Monday, May 18th. We encourage everyone to attend to show your support and vote for the new committee. Following the meeting, we will host a meet-and-greet in the hall, allowing attendees to get to know the new Trustees and discuss their visions for the future of the Hall.

Whilst our end of year accounts are currently being audited the figures submitted show income from bookings, fund-raising events and interest earned over 2025 was approx. £64K. Our general expenditure was roughly £56K and the solar panel installation cost around £25K. We are holding funds of about £74K.

In terms of bookings, the Hall continues to be well-utilized. Most weekdays, the Hall is booked for sessions in the morning, afternoon, and evening. Weekend bookings are more sporadic. The Pavilion remains significantly less utilized than the Hall, although bookings did see a slight increase during 2025. Overall, we have 30 regular group bookings throughout the year, plus a few private parties, weddings and wakes.

Our fundraising events, including Band and Quiz nights, were well-attended. Despite all the rain on the Sunday, NFEST25 was a success, and preparations for NFEST26 began in November!

In addition to routine maintenance, the primary improvement made to the building was the installation of a solar system. After nearly three years of efforts to secure funding, the Management Committee decided in January 2025 to purchase a smaller system. This lower-cost option allowed us to utilize funds already held in reserves by the VHT. The solar panels were installed in May and became operational later that summer. During the summer months, we were able to generate enough electricity on some days to export back to the grid. This equated to a saving of over £2000 on costs when compared to the previous year.

Before I step down, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the MC members for their support and hard work over the years, as well as the Parish Council for their assistance during this transition phase. Having met with the new Trustees several times, I am confident that the Hall will be in capable hands. I wish them all the best and look forward to witnessing their progress.

DRAFT

Debbie Williams April 2026

DRAFT