

HORSEHEATH PARISH COUNCIL

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13 The Green, Weston Colville,
CB21 5NT

Minutes from the meeting of Horseheath Parish Council at 7.30pm on Monday 14th September 2026 in the Village Hall. Meeting documents are available at

<http://www.horseheath-pc.gov.uk>

Present: John Howard, John Miles, Jane Bunting, Nichola Murray, Paul Hunt and Jess Ashbridge (Clerk). Also present in part: County Cllr Henry Batchelor, District Cllr Geoff Harvey, one landowner, and 10 Parishioners.

A Parishioner recorded the session.

Agenda

- 1. Chairman's Welcome** – Cllr Howard welcomed everyone.
- 2. To accept apologies and reasons for absence** – Apologies were approved from Cllr Mundy and Cllr Brown, **P: Cllr Bunting, S: Cllr Murray, All in fav.**
- 3. To approve minutes** – Minutes from the meeting of 13th July were approved. **P: Cllr Murray, S: Cllr Bunting, 3 in fav, Abstain: 1**
- 4. To make any declarations of interest** – None.

5 Public Participation –

Cllr Howard read out two questions that had been sent by a Parishioner –

1. "I understand that, following the change of email provider in October 2025, emails held on the previous system are now said to be "no longer accessible"." It was confirmed to be the case.
2. "Please confirm when Horseheath Parish Council councillors first started using WhatsApp to discuss Parish Council matters." It was advised that the WhatsApp group had been set up in 2023, and that formal approvals were not made using the group, it was for social interaction.

Questions from 4 Parishioners were raised about the Glebelands following the public meeting on the 2nd September: how had the £70,000 figure been calculated? Had there been any communication with the Diocese (EDBF)? Was the ball in the Parish Council (PC) court or EDBF? Would there be further consultations with the Parish?

Cllr Howard reported on a recent phone call with EDBF. It would be discussed later by the PC, who may not come to a formal decision concerning the Diocese's current proposal as Cllrs were absent. The S106 agreement was discussed. It was advised that it seemed to be unusual enforcing conditions on a party that was not part of the s106 discussion. It was felt that reducing the number of parking spaces, and considerations about the footpath around the Church on West Wickham road, which would lead to reducing the hedge, needed further discussion. Cllr Howard advised that the PC would go back to Horseheath Lodge and Devana for their responses to the s106 conditions. It was clear from meeting on 2nd September what the views of Parish, and PC were. If there was a significant change then there would be another consultation.

A Parishioner reported that the pavement on Haverhill Road was in poor condition. The Parishioner was asked to report it on the Highways Portal, and the PC would also report the faults.

A Parishioner asked about kissing gates that had been removed from footpaths through his property. It was confirmed that the previous Chairman had removed the gates during Covid, and they would be returned. The Parishioner reported that motorbikes had been using the footpath – which would be restricted by the gates.

A Parishioner questioned the spending of the grant that had been provided to HVCA by PC for clearing the old playground. It was advised that the PC has no control over the spending carried out by HVCA.

A Parishioner requested that the speed sign was placed on Haverhill Road near the chicanes. Cllr Murray would look for a suitable post on which to mount the sign..

- 6. District and County Council reports** – Reports appended. Importance stressed about completing the Local Plan consultation by 25th September, regarding the site at Grange Farm. Water and transport were the biggest concerns. It was advised that food waste bins would be delivered in October, with publications provided by SCDC about their usage.

7 Status of planning applications at District Council – None.

7.1 Enforcement – Cllr Hunt had reported the Stables, and the damage in the area. He had an altercation with a neighbour while taking pictures for the report.

8.1 Parish Safety Audit – Thanks were offered to Cllr Bunting for carrying out the Parish Safety Audit. A working party would be set up to clean some areas.

8.2 Grass Cutting – no update.

8.3 Horseheath Village Community Association (HVCA) – PC believed that the HVCA were in final stages of their grant application with the Lottery for the new playground.

8.4 Land Behind Village Hall – The PC had seen drafts of the legal agreement for the sale of the area of land at the side and rear (patio) of the site land to HVCA for £1. The lease document was close to being ready for the land behind the Village Hall, for 45 years with 5-year breaks. It would fall under the management of the PC for that time.

8.5 Glebelands – The notes from meeting on 2nd September were received. It was determined that as they were not formal PC minutes, they did not need to be approved. Cllr Howard provided an update following the conversation he had had with EDBF, offering the possibility of EDBF applying to vary some of the planning application. He advised that further contact would be made with Horseheath Lodge and Devana for their views on the conditions. It was decided as the full number of Cllrs was not present and further information was to be sought, that a decision by the PC would be delayed. If there were any big changes to the conditions/purchase, the Parish would be consulted again. If everything was to remain as set out in the s106 agreement, with the PC expected to purchase the land for the proposed £70,000 and to accept the obligations for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and other requirements, it was felt that the views shared by the Parish and Cllrs at the meeting on 2nd September would stand.

8.6 Bus shelters – Cllr Howard advised that it had finally been determined that the responsibility now lay with the Mayor's Office, under their traffic management scheme, contact would be made. The footpath to the stops would also need updating, as it was unsafe in its current form.

8.7 Kingsway Solar – Awaiting further application.

8.8 Grange Farm – A report from meeting on 17th August was received, SAVE and Abington PC were requesting donations towards the legal challenge. Concerns were raised that if the Local Plan was not considered to be sound resulting in a planning policy interregnum from 2030 there would be no local restrictions on development. Cllr Hunt advised that there were stricter controls in the new National Planning Framework, but it was better if there was a Local Plan with an agreed 5 year land supply plan in place. It was proposed to donate £500 to the SAVE campaign. **P: Cllr Bunting S: Cllr Murray, All in fav.**

8.9 Local Plan - Comments were to be made on the consultation. The closing date was 25th September. Water, traffic, biodiversity, loss of ancient monument sites, environmental degradation, and destruction of the Green Belt were the main concerns for the development. Active travel and the new park and ride development at Babraham were supported; without further improvements to A1307 and an extra link route across the A11 the Park and Ride would not be viable. The Consultation link would be publicised further via email/facebook.

8.10 Policies – Social media policy adopted **P: Cllr Bunting, S: Cllr Miles, All in fav.** Vexatious Complaints Policy withdrawn to be re-presented in November.

8.11 Parishioner Conduct – Cllrs, who are all volunteers, abided by the Nolan Principles under the Code of Conduct. Cllr Howard advised that the PC relied on parishioners to act with consideration and decency. However, he had received from one single Parishioner c.130 emails since December 2024 concerning processes, and expressing complaints. He expected that the Clerk had received a similar, if not larger figure. (11 emails had been received in the 14 days of September alone). Over the last few years the Parishioner had also submitted 5 Freedom of Information (FOI)/Subject Access Requests (SAR) requests; 15 complaints had been made to the Monitoring Officer at SCDC about a Cllr; 3 formal complaints to the PC about process; one governance review under Environmental Information Regulations (EIR), and one formal complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). The amount of work for the Clerk over the years, fulfilling the requirements under FOI/SAR, plus handling the very frequent and lengthy emails was estimated to have cost the PC £500 in salary and overtime. For August and September alone the Clerk's overtime was £212.78. Cllr Howard felt this expenditure impacted every household paying the precept, and wondered how the PC could best mitigate this expenditure. Cllr Bunting, Cllr Hunt, Cllr Murray, and Cllr Miles felt that the PC had behaved appropriately, with engagement with local authorities, and advisory services CAPALC, and SLCC. A Parishioner became aggressive, interrupting, so the conversation was drawn to a close.

9.1 Speedwatch & Moving Vehicle Activated Sign (MVAS) update – Outside College Farm on the West Wickham Road 21% of traffic had been speeding with a maximum speed of 54mph. At a second location outside Red Lion – a similar proportion of traffic was speeding but a maximum speed of 60mph had been recorded at 3.59pm in the afternoon. There was a big decrease in vehicle movements in August compared to May. Data would be added to the website. It was determined to seek a consultation with the Highways Officer, to determine if a further LHI could affect traffic calming driving through Horseheath. An option might be to make the speed limit in Haverhill Road 20mph. Speedwatch had not happened for some time, as more volunteers were required. A call for volunteers would be added to the Venture.

9.2 Footpaths – Correspondence had been received from a Parishioner regarding footpath 131/5, which ran through their property. The Parishioner was interested in extinguishing the use of the footpath. The Clerk had advised the Parishioner to contact the Public Rights of Way (PROW) Officer. Another Parishioner had been in touch about the same footpath, they were also directed to discuss with PROW. It was noted that several footpaths were restricted. The local landowner would ensure these were cleared.

10. Burial Ground – None

11. Risk Assessment – Defibrillator batteries had been ordered.

12. Finance

12.1. To Approve Payments – Defibrillator batteries £250 each, Clerk's overtime 10hrs. Red Side Up printing for SAVE meeting £56. New Good Energy street lighting contract had been arranged. **P: Cllr Bunting, S: Cllr Murray, All in fav.**

12.2 Saffron Building Society – To be done, update for next meeting.

Receipts

Payment Date and Detail	Amount
15.07.26 CCC Grass Cutting rebate	£1,953.08
04.09.26 West Wickham PC leaflets SAVE event	£28

Payments since last meeting

Payment Date	Description	Payee	Amount
07.09.26	Uncontested election cost	SCDC	£105
07.09.26	Internal Audit	CAPALC	£303.48
28.08.26	Grass Cutting	ML Partnership	£385.50
20.08.26	3hrs overtime	Clerk	£46.68

12.3 Account Balances

- Unity Treasurer's account - £2,470.39 as of 9th September.
- Unity Instant Access Savings Account - £46,958.65 as of 9th September.
- Village Sign Maintenance Fund - £6,391

Saffron Building Society Burial Ground Fund - £17,553.35 as of 31st December 2025

13. Matters for the Next Agenda – Vexatious Complaint Policy, Local Plan Consultation, Glebelands, Saffron Building Society.

Dates of Next Meeting: 9th November.

14. Complaints - Under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and in accordance with 3d pursuant to Standing Order 11, it was resolved that the Public are excluded from any discussion on this item as it concerns complaints **P: Cllr Bunting, S: Cllr Hunt, All in fav.** EIR complaint would be investigated by Cllr Harper.

15 Employment - Under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and in accordance with 3d pursuant to Standing Order 11, it was resolved that the Public are excluded from any discussion on this item as it concerns employment **P: Cllr Bunting, S:**

Cllr Miles, All in fav. It was proposed that the Clerk would be raised up to Band 17, £16.61 p/h. Backpay would be awarded to April 2026.

Cllr Howard closed the meeting at 9.20pm.

District and County Councillor's Report – September 2026

Local Plan

We are now at a very key time in the process for the District Council's Local Plan (the blueprint outlining where to build houses, public amenities and employment space over the next 20 years), we have entered the final round of public consultation that is being undertaken before the plan will be submitted to government for examination. This is very important as it's the last opportunity for us to comment on the proposals before the council can choose to make any final adjustments before submitting. The comments made at this stage will be seen by the planning inspector, who is the one that will make the final judgement on whether the Local Plan is deemed to be 'sound', or not.

The big-ticket item in our area is the Grange Farm new town proposal. Initially it was proposed to build a new 6000 house development to the north of Abington. There were over 1000 representations received via the first public consultation in January this year, on the Grange Farm proposal alone, so thank you to all those who engaged with the process. Following this the council has made some changes – the main two being the number of houses has been reduced from 6000 to 4500 giving a density of circa 45-60 houses per hectare. They have also increased the landscape buffer between the Roman Road, which is classed as a historic monument, and the nearest house. The other big issue is water supply – where will it come from? Given the scale of the proposal at Grange Farm, the proposed plan is to not begin construction of the site until 2034, when a new pipeline from Graham Water is installed and operational. There is also a new reservoir being built in Fenland that will service our area, due around the same time.

Whatever the final proposal is, please do use this opportunity to comment on it – positively or negatively – as Grange Farm would be the largest settlement in our area, if taken forward. You can submit your views on the Council's website - <https://consultations.greatercambridgeplanning.org/proposed-submission-greater-cambridge-local-plan>

There are also a raft of public events that the Council are running around the area, where you can go and ask the team questions directly, get the actual facts about the proposals and get help submitting comments, if needed. The events being held locally have all occurred but the full schedule of the public events can be seen here - <https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/local-and-neighbourhood-planning/emerging-plans-and-guidance/greater-cambridge-local-plan-the-20-year-plan-for-the-greater-cambridge-area>

Local Government Reorganisation

The government's plan to turn all local authorities in the country into 'Unitary Authorities' has hit yet another stumbling block. We were originally expecting an announcement from the minister on what the new geographies of the new councils would be back in July. This announcement was then postponed until October this year. We then heard in early September that the entire plan for Cambridgeshire was being paused until further notice,

which came as a surprise to a lot of us given the amount of time, effort and money the local authorities have put into facilitating the request. This means that the timetable we had previously reported on, has changed – we now definitely won't have local elections for the new unitary council in 2027, with the earliest date 2028 and said council coming into being in 2029. A bit of a mess to say the least.

Other Planning Matters

You may have also seen that the planning situation in the Greater Cambridge area is to become more complicated. We already knew that we are to have a Development Corporation implemented in our area, which will make all of the decision on 'Strategic Sites' in the South Cambs and Cambridge City areas. This can be anything from a site of 250 houses and higher.

We now also have the added complication of Mayors being given more planning powers by central government than they already have, which is essentially only transport planning. They will soon have the power to veto any planning decision made by any of the local councils in the county.

Food Waste Collection

The roll out of separate food waste collections are slowly moving forward. The next tranche of food bins are being delivered in the first week of September. Our part of the District is the last to get the new bins and is currently on schedule to start in October this year.