

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD 20th May 2026

1, The Chairman of Wenhaston Parish Council welcomed all to the meeting. There were no apologies for absence.

2, The minutes to the previous meeting held on 21st May 2025 were approved and signed as being an accurate record of proceedings.

3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT WENHASTON with MELLS PARISH COUNCIL.

Chairman provided a full report on the work of the Parish Council undertaken during the 12 months to 31/3/26. A copy of the report is available upon request to the Parish Clerk.

4. FINANCIAL REPORT 2025/26 WENHASTON with MELLS PARISH COUNCIL.

The Parish Council remains in a reasonably strong financial position. Funds held at the end of the financial year amounted to £43387. This is a reduction of £1408 vs previous year. Draft accounts together with other statutory reporting requirements appear on the PC website but I shall now provide a brief summary.

Capital expenditure for the year was £6525 and made from reserves. Reserves currently total £31750. (£30000 repairs and renewal for sports area/children's play area) £1750 (Office / computer equipment renewal) Agreed budget for 2026/27 financial year is £30460.

The Parish Council does not currently hold CIL funds for allocation.

The Parish Council received no donations during the financial year. The following donations were made. SARS £200 RBL Poppy Appeal £127 Wenhaston Village show £500 Wenhaston Warbler and Halesworth Dementia Carers fund £500.

5. WENHASTON CHARITIES REPORT.

A copy of the report is available upon request from the Parish Clerk.

6. BLACKHEATH COMMONS REPORT. WENHASTON COMMONS GROUP.

Myles Archibald provided a full report on the work undertaken by Wenhaston Commons Group during the previous 12 months. This work continues to be undertaken in conjunction with Suffolk Wildlife Trust as part of the Parish Council's management agreement with the Rural Payments Agency. A copy of the report is available from the Parish Clerk.

7. OPEN FORUM.

Parishioners were given the opportunity to put questions to County, District and Parish Councillors. The following matters will be taken forward to the June meeting of the Parish Council.
(i) Telephone Box. Possible sign and QR Code providing link to village website. (ii) Publication of Parish Councillor contact details via noticeboard.

MEETING CLOSED AT 7.35PM

CHAIR'S REPORT NOTES APM

Refurbishment/painting of outside gym area and surround. Work completed with the engagement of the Community Payback Scheme.

Village emergency plan updated in conjunction with the Village Hall Committee to take account of available resources.

Ongoing representation on behalf of the village at the various meetings held throughout the year regarding the major infrastructure projects under consideration for Suffolk.

Continued representations to East Suffolk council regarding failure of service issues ie dog waste bins and emptying schedules.

An initial bio -diversity plan has been formulated and it is anticipated that the Parish Council will promote and support initiatives to develop this further with Wilder Wenhaston Group.

A memorial to the late Heather Phillips MBE has been ordered on behalf of the Parish Council to recognise Heather's contribution to Wenhaston during her lifetime.

The Parish Council were involved with and responded to 23 planning applications during the year.

A total of £1577 was contributed to various organisations and charitable causes during the year by the Parish Council.

The Parish Council received good support from County and District Councillors during the past 12 months, we are also grateful for their financial contributions made to village projects during that time.

I cannot start this years report without saying what a sad year it has been for the Trust on a personal level with the loss of our incredible and much loved Trustee Mrs Heather Phillips MBE and paying tribute to her outstanding service not only to the Trust but to the village as a whole.

It is not the same without her at meetings and her wise counsel and extensive knowledge of the village is sorely missed by us all.

However the show must go on and it has been a busy year for the Trust. A growing issue has been the escalating cost of school transport for families in the parish. So we have used our social media on the Facebook site and also shared messages onto the Wenhaston village page to advertise to families that we can help with grants towards the cost of the school bus to high school.

As a consequence we have seen quite an uptake on our annual travel grant of £250 per child for this purpose as well as the annual transition grant to help buy uniform for those children moving from Primary to High School.

We have made a sizeable donation to the Primary School to assist with transport and other costs on the London and the Bawdsey residential trips. Other resources purchased for the Primary School included leavers 'hoody' sweatshirts, kitchen garden equipment, rugs and cushions for outdoor learning, a wide range of numeracy resources, new books including SEN provision titles and art and craft equipment. In addition we responded to applications from families on an individual basis and made grants for resources and help towards trips.

We were thrilled to hear that Wenhaston Primary was honoured at their Asset Academy annual awards this school year, receiving the prestigious 'ASSET Village School of the Year award. This accolade celebrates the strong and productive relationships the school has fostered with our village and the wider local community. Well done all the team and children at the school.

Congratulations also to Mr Stone and his staff for a very positive Ofsted report this school year and the growing numbers at the school are testament to the incredible work they all put in to make it the wonderful place of learning it is today.

The Facebook page for Pepyn & Lessey Trust is regularly updated with news of latest awards and details of forthcoming meetings. In a world of ever changing technology it is proving to be a popular way to communicate with parents and encourage applications in the future. As a Trust we are striving to embrace a modern approach whilst holding dear to those traditions such as Harold Hatcher Bookgiving that make Wenhaston the unique place it is.

On the subject of school awards and in honour of Heather's outstanding contribution to village life over so many years, last summer Trustees decided to introduce the Heather Phillips Awards. The awards will be presented annually at the school in four categories to reflect the values of the school: Aiming high, becoming resilient learners, communicating effectively and becoming global citizens.

The awards are hand crafted from Wenhaston wood with brass plaques and are on display here if anyone would like to see them.

We are all so sad that Heather will not be here to present them this summer but shortly before she passed away our chairperson Glenis visited her to ask for her approval to introduce the awards and she was absolutely delighted with the proposal which is nice to know.

I hope you'll agree that the Trust is making a valuable contribution to enhance the education of children in the Parish and we look forward to the challenges that lie ahead throughout the forthcoming year.