



High Easter Parish Council

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING Held at High Easter Village Hall on Monday, 11th May 2026 at 6.30pm

In attendance were 3 members of the public, 5 members of the Parish Council and the Parish Clerk.

1. Chairman's welcome

The Chair, Cllr Lodge opened the meeting at 6.38pm with 3 residents in attendance. Cllr Lodge thanked Parish Councillors and residents for attending the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence

Cllr O'Connor

3. Minutes of the previous Annual Village Meeting on Tuesday, 6th May 2025.

The meeting **resolved and agreed** to approve the minutes and the Chair signed them as a record of the previous meeting last year.

4. District and County Council Statement

District Councillor Susan Barker sent her apologies and so did new County Councillor Geoff Bagnall. The Clerk updated the meeting on the recent Local Elections results and the outcome on 7th May of Cllr Bagnall's election for Takeley Division. Cllr Bagnall has previously been a parish councillor on Takeley Parish Council and is also a District Councillor on Uttlesford District Council for Takeley Ward.

5. Parish Council Chairman's Statement

Cllr Lodge read a report of the previous year.

The year began with our weekly mobile post office arriving on the Friday afternoon at the Village Hall car park. Green waste collections re-started at the beginning of March helping every resident to save the cost of the District Council's garden waste collection service to households of £70 per year.

A vehicle activated sign was installed to monitor speeds of vehicles entering the 30mph speed limit near the Village Hall. This has been successful in demonstrating a ninety-eight percent adherence to the speed limit and improving road safety at this end of the village.

The Monday Muster seated exercise group continues and has an active group of supporters attending regularly. If you would like to get involved or volunteer to help make soup then please

Signed
Robert Lodge
Chair of High Easter Parish Council

contact the Clerk. The group was supported by funding from the High Easter 10k road race, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the Essex Rural Fund.

There was a litter pick in October to help keep the village clean and tidy with 15 volunteers turning out. Thank you to everyone that took part. A large crowd attended the Remembrance Day Service and commemoration of the 80th anniversary of VE Day at the Village War Memorial which saw a fly-pass by World War One biplane and a poppy petal drop.

In addition to raising funds through the Parish Council precept on the Council Tax charge, the Parish Council brings in around sixty percent more through grants for specific projects. Due to uncertainty about the future in relation to the creation and transfer of responsibilities from Essex County Council to the new unitary authorities the Parish Council is taking action to build up reserves of income for repair work and future responsibilities likely to fall to parishes.

[Precept has risen in 26/27 to £27,100, which will show as a 14.39% increase on the current year on council tax bills for the Parish Council portion of the Precept. The average band D cost will be £77.17 per annum an increase of £9.71. On a Band H house it will be an increase of £19.42 per annum]

Forty percent of the income to the Parish Council is spent within the parish boundaries and a further twenty-two percent on top of this within Uttlesford district.

I would like to thank all Councillors for their time and effort in attending meetings and events over the last year which is done of their own goodwill.

The new Local Plan 2021 to 2041 was adopted by Uttlesford District Council at the end of March 2026 and this continues to support local ad-hoc in-fill development for the village without proposing larger scale developments. The parish council continues to push Uttlesford to ensure that where it sees breaches in planning these are pursued, and this year the parish council has sent both written correspondence and held in person meetings.

Looking forwards... The Parish Council has been successful in leading another coalition of Parish and Town Councils to secure funding for a Monday bus service between High Easter and Epping. The grant funding has come from the Department of Transport and Essex County Council for this project and more details will be coming forwards shortly on this new service. The timetables for the existing Dunmow to Chelmsford bus service has been put up in bus shelters along the route as requested at last year's village meeting and sent to local homes through the post.

Two new picnic benches have been crafted from locally sourced wood for installation at Granetts Wood Car Park and these were paid for by Cllr Susan Barker's Locality fund at Essex County Council. The installation of these picnic tables will take place shortly.

A new extension to the play park area at the Village Hall is being constructed and will be completed in the next week or so. We plan to have an unveiling in June 2026. The Parish Council is also committed to paying for the re-painting of the telephone box on The Street. This next year will see the development of a new village website resource and many more exciting projects to help boost High Easter as a great place to live and work.

6. Report from any other village groups or organisations

Gordon Robinson said that it had been a very good year for the Village Hall Committee with plenty of events staged and supported by local residents. He offered his thanks to the Parish Council for

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Chair of High Easter Parish Council

their continuing support with the many events. The financial situation was looking positive for the Village Hall Committee with around c.£26,000 from events with reserves to cover 6 months of the year and emergency repairs. The solar panels have finally been accepted by EDF and now that the feed in tariff has been resolved the account is now receiving 0.15p per unit of generation.

The Committee members work to ensure a first class facility for all. And along with the ad-hoc events there are many fixed users of the hall throughout the week such as the pre-school, dance classes, 10K race (Coming up in June), Friday socials including: Rugby, Greek night, pizza night, pie night, quiz night and the regular post-Christmas panto.

A current project that the Committee members are looking at is re-purposing the changing rooms to provide a larger function room. The solar room is going to be toilets for pre-school use. Then the Committee Room wall can be taken out to create a bigger function room separated from the rooms used by the nursery and have a toilet on the corner of the village hall. The proposal to get a porta cabin at the end of the field for football club changing room facilities had been suggested by Cllr Lodge. The proposal offers the prospect of change to the internal structures to allow for expanding use of the Village Hall and also utilises the utilities where they are currently rather than expensive moves for the services. The changing rooms are under utilised. There would continue to be no cross over between pre-school and function room users.

Coming up plenty of events such as the Beer festival (July 3rd and 4th) and Halloween party along with a New Year Party all planned. Gordon said that a 1st or 8th of June AGM of the Village Hall committee meeting is coming up.

Mike Parnell added that he was thankful for the use of the hall for the Parochial Church Council (PCC) meetings.

Cllr Lodge invited Mike Parnell to speak about the previous year for the PCC.

Mike Parnell said the resignation of the Vicar had been 'a surprise' to the Ten Parishes. The Ten Parishes currently has a vacancy. There had been one applicant, but it has to be secret to everyone except the interviewers. The interview will take place in the coming weeks. So, hoping there will be a new vicar in the parish in due course, if the applicant is successful.

St Mary's Church, High Easter has received excellent support by the Associate Minister, Rev Tim Goodbody and he has helped to provide a lot more services during the vacancy. Mike said he would like to offer his thanks to the work that Tim has put into the village and the Ten Parishes to make sure that the congregations receive pastoral support from the Church of England.

Recently held the PCC AGM and elected two Church Wardens. It costs £450 a week to run St Mary's Church without any repairs and the PCC is very grateful to the members of the village who support financially or volunteer work in the churchyard. Without their help it would not be possible to continue.

Thursday [14th May] at 8pm is the Ascension service and a rocket will be let off from the top of the tower by Cllr Lodge.

Cllr Colgrave asked on the latest about bees in the Belfry. Mike said that the bees had been there for many years since at least his move to High Easter in 1977. The crack in the tower has caused the belfry to be closed.

Signed
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Cllr Lodge thanked Mike Parnell for his work for the Village and Church.

7. Parishioners Questions and Comments

Mike Parnell asked if local information could be put up in the telephone kiosk, such as a map with information. This is because the signs on the phone box do say 'information' and currently it is purely a book exchange.

Mr Parnell did say that he does use the bus to the railway station and wants it to stop at the station first before the retail market to avoid it missing the railway station before it loops back to the Chignals. Cllr Lodge took this point on board and said he would look at implementing it.

8. Date and Time of Next Meeting

7.00pm on Tuesday, 4th May 2027.

Meeting closed by Cllr Lodge at 7.00pm.