

DRAFT MINUTES OF PAKENHAM ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
Held on Thursday, 15th May 2025 at 7pm in the Village Hall

Present: 15 members of the public attended
Mrs S Brown parish clerk took the minutes

The Chairman of the Parish Council Nick Davey welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. **Apologies:** No apologies received.
2. **To sign the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 16 May, 2024:** All present agreed that the minutes should be signed as a true record
3. **County Councillor's Report:** Councillor Hopfensperger attended the annual report had been received and circulated which included: Funding boost for new and existing bus services across Suffolk; Suffolk to benefit from huge £7.3m EV investment; even more potholes filled as Roadmender trial hits Suffolk; East of England local authorities collaborate to appeal for more foster families to work with their council; Councillors recommended to approve an extra £9.1m for SEND services; Major flood investigation report published as Suffolk continues response to Storm Babet; Small improvements needed as children's services Ofsted report published; Energy projects and the wellbeing of communities; £500m investments in Suffolk scrapped by government; plans unveiled for A12 major road network improvements in East Suffolk; SCC set on major investment to further protect Suffolk from flooding as it calls on Government to step up; Council welcomes news that the Nautilus Interconnector project will not be coming to Suffolk; Suffolk celebrates as local organisations are awarded the King's Award for Voluntary Services; Suffolk's new gritting fleet to keep county safe and moving during the colder months; Royal opening for the Gull Wing bridge; new study considers impacts of nuclear and major infrastructure projects; Suffolk's rural communities hit by loss of £3m in Government funding; Cabinet approves bold new vision for Suffolks future; Suffolk and east of England councils seek fairness in the face of energy projects; Councils budget prioritises vulnerable residents and essential services; unique landscape to be changed forever by pylons; new cabinet role to lead on devolution and local government reform in Suffolk; £1.6m investment proposed following inspection of Suffolk fire and rescue service; SCC confirms 2025/26 budget; arts organisations get £500,000 funding boost; Suffolk communities to suffer from lack of energy project coordination; County leaders to propose one council for Suffolk; SCC confirms decision to bring Library Services back in-house and 200 new specialist SEND places for Suffolk.

Cllr Hopfensperger gave a brief update on local government re-organisation: 2 business cases have been submitted to Government and gave an overview, advised engagement processes will be carried out in the next few months. A useful highways site took place yesterday with Cllr Davey, Cllr Palfrey, SCC highways officer and a resident visiting both Fen Road and Mill Road, looking particularly at the damage caused by the closure of the A1088. It was felt a very positive response had come from highways, where the most damage had been caused plainings and topsoil would be used if the damage was not too deep topsoil only would be used. Highways will keep the parish council updated. The claimed footpath a draft report had been completed by SCC with the recommendation to reject the application with no case to open it up to a public right of way. Cllr Speed to give the update on the kebab van. Cllr Hopfensperger confirmed she had chased for an update on Fulmer bridge on Thieves Lane, this is in the process of getting a quote for the design work. It was advised if anyone spots a highways issue to report it on the SCC website where a report number will be given and Cllr Hopfensperger will chase if necessary. Cllr Dorling advised instances where several issues had been reported and often highways comes back that it is not appropriate

for any works to be carried out this includes numerous reports on the blocked gully which is now finally being looked at. Cllr Hopfensperger to investigate how many times this gully had been reported to SCC. It was advised monies were available from the locality budget and highways locality budget.

District Councillor Report: Councillor Andrew Speed attended and gave his annual report: Devolution and reorganisation of local government will be a very big topic for the next few years. The new Mayorality covering Norfolk and Suffolk is a major change and the mayor will have a big task. Devolution it is likely to have one or two unitary councils. The role of parish councils may change with maybe more opportunity to have added powers to address some of the highway issues. The local plan has bedded in and there is more pressure for West Suffolk to build more houses in the next few years. A meeting had been held in regards the kebab van with the WS officer in charge, Cllr Berry from Pakenham pc, a representative from Ixworth parish council. The new trading policy came into effect in January; the kebab van owner had not applied for a trading licence therefore a legal case is being put together as he no longer has a licence to trade. Cllr Speed has also asked WS to consider the environment and fire risk at the kebab van the officer to take these points forward.

4. Annual reports:

Allotments – The Clerk to the Council advised all plots were currently rented with one allotment holder wishing to take on an extra plot if it becomes available. Rent of £250 received for 2025-26 with £20 rent still outstanding.

Pakenham Charities – The treasurer from Pakenham Charities was not able to attend a report had been received and was read to the meeting: Pakenham Charities for the Poor is one of three charitable trusts for the parish, originating in bequests dating from centuries ago. The income is derived from the rent of land and investments, plus one third of the income of the Pakenham Town Estate Trust. The remaining Town Estate Trust income is divided between the Church and the Education Trust. This report concerns only the Charities for the Poor.

Income to the Charities for the Poor is used to make a small annual grant, intended under the trust deed for the purchase of fuel, to elderly, disabled or disadvantaged residents. Grants are also made, on a one-off basis, to individuals with particular needs, and to organisations of benefit to the residents of Pakenham parish.

The Trustees at the close of 2024 were the vicar, the Reverend Katherine Valentine (Chair), Mrs Marion Sargent and Mr Karl Scott as co-opted Trustees for the Charities for the Poor, Mr Cedric Palfrey and Mr Derek Dorling, representing the Parish Council and Anne Harrison and Martin Harrison, Churchwardens.

The Charity Trustees have continued to advertise locally and online and have responded to 4 one-off requests for grant funding during the year, resulting in a total of £1150 awarded for specific assistance (in 2023, there was a one-off grant totalling £250). Advice is also made available on other local organisations to which residents may apply. The Charities were grateful to receive 2 donations. One of £150 to the Poores from a resident and one of £286 collected at a funeral for a local resident.

Income to the Charities for the Poor, totalled £7084 for the year to December 31st, 2024. The annual allocation from the Town Estate was £5,750, with the remainder of the income received from investments, rents, bank interest and donations. There was also £2,427 in a savings account at the close of the year.

The Pakenham Charities for the Poor Trustees met as usual in early December to decide on the main allocation of available funds. A total of £7130 was allocated as charitable grants to individuals and organisations in 2024, with individuals benefitting from a total of £6730. Ixworth Patients Association, the only organisation currently receiving assistance, was awarded £400.

At the annual allocations meeting, the Trustees responded to further increases in investment income during 2023 by awarding an increased fuel grant of £220, a £20 increase over 2023. The same number of village residents, 24 in total, received fuel grants this year. The total cost of fuel grants was £5,280. In addition, three gifts of £100 were made to former Pakenham residents now in residential care.

Ongoing monthly support continues for an alarm and monitoring system for one village resident. The total cost of supporting this system was £159 in 2024. Income received from wayleave is divided between the Charities for the Poor and the Town Estate, accounting for £13 paid annually to the Town Estate. A donation of £150 was received from a village resident. Administrative expenses were £250 in 2024.

The Charities for the Poor responded to four individual appeals for assistance during 2024, totalling £1150. Applicants are provided with contact details for the Spring Stanley Trust and other local charities, such as those distributing food parcels. As always, Pakenham residents are welcome to approach the clerk with requests by letter, telephone or email at any time during the year. All applications will be dealt with promptly and in strict confidence.

This report concerns only the Charities for the Pakenham Charities for the Poor. Accounts 2024-25 are attached to the minutes.

Pakenham Village Hall & Playing Field Association – The Chair of the PVH & PFA attended and gave a report 2024 - 2025: Further details can be found on their website. An overview of the treasurer's report with a focus on obtaining grants now to support the replacement of the pavilion. The committee posts for the previous year were given. The village hall is here to support our local community of which many clubs and individuals do tireless other charity work. To this end where the criteria is met the committee will provide the Hall for a nominal fee of £20. Following minor vandalism at the pavilion CCTV was installed, funding was provided by Cllr Speed which now covers the pavilion and play area. The pavilion has some improvements including a set of patio doors thanks to members of the social club who did the work namely Richard Mayhew and John Speare. Five new picnic benches were provided by grant monies gained by Paul Harris also extra bins to facilitate our many dog owners. With the new play area, pavilion improvements it was agreed the rental charges would be increased regular booking £20 occasional bookings £35 for village residents and £50 for others. Much behind the scenes work is ongoing regarding the new pavilion the plans have been approved by the local council with thanks to Jono Mawford. Several fund-raising events took place through the year. Thanks to Kathy and the village café team who have continued to provide much used social meeting environment. Thanks to the many village organisations and the people who keep them going without which we would not be able to maintain the facility. It was advised that following the AGM at the beginning of May this year Paul Harris had been appointed Chair.

PCC: Churchwardens Report – The Churchwardens were unable to attend but had sent through a report which was read to the meeting: Regular worship services have been held throughout the year, with St Mary's Church hosting the monthly family@church benefice service on the first Sunday of each month. Festival Services, - Harvest Festival, Christmas and Easter have also been held. The Deanery Service for the Ascension Day was held at the Church. The Memorial Service held in October was well attended and appreciated. There were three funerals, two baptisms, one wedding and four confirmations during the year. We are grateful for the continued support of our Reader Di Barker and all our Elders. Many thanks to our organists Margaret Salmon, Elizabeth Moore and Harry Carroll-Davis, who have continued to enhance our services with music when they can. We welcome the bellringers for their regular practices on a Friday, and for services and special events. The Floodlights have been sponsored by many people during the year, making the church a feature in the evenings. We fully appreciate all the assistance provided with flower arranging, cleaning and preparation for services and events by residents within our village.

We continue to operate the Food Bank, and our thanks go to all those who make donations to this worthwhile cause. It continues to be well used, and we appreciate the receipt of a grant from a local charity which enables us to compliment the donations to keep it always stocked.

Our afternoon teas take place approximately every six weeks. These are very much enjoyed by those who attend and are open to everyone within the village and surrounding areas. Lifts are provided if required, and food is also taken to anyone who is unable to attend, and we are happy to expand this if anyone else would benefit. We also hold a monthly coffee morning, on the first

Thursday of each month, this provides both a warm space during the winter months, and a chance to meet and chat with friends old and new.

At Easter craft bags were distributed to some of the local children, and at Christmas gift bags were distributed to some of the elderly residents in the village.

The Church remains open every day of the year, and many visitors come to explore its history or just to sit and enjoy the peace and tranquillity. We are fortunate to have such a lovely building within our village, but the costs of maintaining it are increasing each year. Many people enjoy walking around the churchyard each day, and we try to manage it with wildlife and eco credentials in mind. We do receive many positive comments both on the Churchyard and the Church itself.

Unfortunately, during the year, we were let down by the grass cutting contractor so the churchyard became rather overgrown, this has now been rectified, and regular cutting will take place during 2025.

Fundraising events were many varied and represent much hard work from many people in the church and village, and we are very grateful for so much local support. We were pleased to once again put on a summer outdoor theatre event, welcoming the Immersion Theatre with a performance of Peter Pan. A large audience was very appreciative, enjoying the performance and picnic. We are grateful to all from the church and community who helped support this event and enabled it to happen.

A new fundraising venture for this year hosted two folk concerts: Daisy Chute & Ed Blunt, and the band Lady Maisery. These concerts attracted large audiences from around the country, and more are planned for 2025. We are very grateful to David Reece for his initiative and work in organising these concerts and for everyone in the church and village who pulled together to make them so successful. They proved to be wonderful evenings, and valuable in the way they brought church and community together in a joint effort.

A Coffee morning was held at Barton Mere, which was well-supported and very generously hosted by the Stenderup family. It was a lovely day to get together and a privilege to wander around such a beautiful garden.

In November a Christmas Bazaar was held in the Village Hall and was organised on behalf of the church and the Food Bank by Helen Gilles and family, and our thanks go to them for their generosity and hard work. The Suffolk Historic Churches Trust 'Ride & Stride' took place in September and thanks to everyone who walked, cycled or stewarded the event.

Our thanks go to all who help in the church, flower arrangers, cleaners, PCC members, those who assist with teas and coffees and so much more. Keeping St Mary's Church open and financially stable relies so much on this support and we hope everyone within the village benefits from the presence of such a magnificent building. St Mary's Church Pakenham

Threads – A report was given: The group has been running for more than 10 years now and supports itself, enjoying refreshment supplied by a member each week and there is always a lively chat. The cost of £3 per week has remained the same since the group started. Threads meet each Wednesday afternoon and regularly has trips out and with thanks to the generosity of drivers we haven't had to hire any vehicles or reimburse fuel costs. Each December the group enjoys an Xmas meal. Saturday sewing days have been popular as the whole day is given over to compete or start a project and I look forward to many more Wednesdays. Bery Sidebotham

Tree Wardens Report – A report was given by the Parish Council tree warden Cllr Derek Dorling: 2024 was a very different year to 2023 which was very dry, it started raining in early spring and just kept going, producing an amazing growing season for our Trees. 2025 seems to be heading for another year of drought and we pray for some goodly amount of rain in the not-too-distant future.

Countryside Conservation and Tree Work are into their second year of grass cutting and general maintenance for the parish council and I am finding them to be very obliging and easy to work with. Our usual round of thanks go to Graham Cranmer for carrying out

monthly health and safety check walks around the Village, and thanks also to James Beatty and partner Jenny who keep Church Green Wood looking great with help from neighbours. During last summer we replaced the information board at the entrance to the wood which was becoming illegible, and we are extremely grateful for the help and expertise from Jono Mawford in designing and purchasing the new board.

The ongoing task of taming the boundary hedges around the Allotments and Ex Bowls Green continues and we are in discussions with M& TJs who flail the hedges for us.

Village & Church Newsletter – The Editor was unable to attend but had sent a report which was read to the meeting: Eleven publications were produced, and the Village and Church news continues to receive support in the form of articles, advertising of local events, and business advertising. It continues to be an asset, and thanks are due to all those involved in production and distribution. Martin Harrison (Editor)

Women's Institute – The Women's Institute report was given: We have been busy doing all sorts, both at our meetings in this hall and trips by coach to places like Sandringham flower show and Burghley House and gardens. A ghost walk in Bury was reported by members to be a real hit and suitably spooky in places. Having a healthy membership our subscription income allows us to invite speakers to share their knowledge, experiences and interests with us. Our annual jumble sale also helps us part fund our activities. A jumble sale is hard work to organise but great fun to be involved with. Martin, who lives in Pakenham, is a prison dog handler. He came with his two dogs and demonstrated what each dog was trained to sniff out! One month we learned of the Gatehouse foodbank and the Gatehouse project. Another month we were stunned by the forensics used in investigating rape cases, contrasted another time with an evening of burlesque, which many could not resist having a go at! A very important day for us is our annual coffee morning. Every penny raised is for our local St Nicholas Hospice. September the 28th last was a special day indeed the cyclists from Bury Wheelers arrived en masse adding colour and much jollity and very generous support. We support our local church too, giving our time when needed to help with their events. We have much to look forward to in the year to come. Please read what's happening at our meetings each month in the Village and Church News and know ladies you are always most welcome to come along as our guest. Pat Addington (President) and Marion Sargent

Parish Council Report – The Chair gave a report: A warm welcome to everyone here this evening. We've had our usual influx of planning applications this year, some straight forward, some not so. We had issues with one development near The Dell which took Pakenham into the local press, this issue I believe is still ongoing.

The Stowlangtoft A1088 bridge has taken up most of the year, with setbacks due to the wrong concrete. The closure meant Mill Road and Fen Road were now classed as 'rat-runs' resulting in traffic chaos, and damage that still hasn't been rectified.

We were pleased to see the Pavilion granted planning permission and look forward very much to seeing progress on this. All credit must go to Paul Harris for his hard work in getting funding for this project.

The Chairman's report wouldn't be complete without reference to the Ixworth kebab van ... ongoing now for over 8 years without resolve although perhaps this is about to change.

The Pakenham Fox goes from strength to strength, music days, pub bingo just to name two. I'm so pleased that our small village has a vibrant pub, our own post office and mini shop these facilities most villages can only dream of having, long may this continue.

Lastly, enormous thanks must go to all the parish councillors for their dedication to the parish council, giving up their free time for the wellbeing of Pakenham. Thank you also must go to Beccy and Andrew for their help in top level council matters, your time and help is very much appreciated. This leaves just one more 'thank you' and that goes to the Parish Clerk Sandra who has sadly announced her retirement as parish clerk later this year. I've said it before and I'll say it again, without her vast knowledge and council 'know how' I would be "up the creek without a paddle" for sure. Everyone wishes her a wonderful retirement. Nick Davey Chairman.

Open Forum: No resident wished to speak.

5. Date of the next meeting: The date of the next meeting to be confirmed.

There being no further matters the meeting closed at 7.40 pm