PEASENHALL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Peasenhall Parish Council Meeting
held at the Assembly Hall on Wednesday 21 October 2026 at 19:00

2026/103 Election of Chair

Cllr Barry Rowing's resignation from the Parish Council was received and the Council recorded its thanks for his work as Chair during the preceding three years.

Cllr Stephen Long offered to serve as Chair if no one else wanted to put themselves forward. Cllr Bimson proposed that Cllr Long should be elected as Chair. This was seconded by John Bawtree and was unanimously agreed. Cllr Long signed the declaration of acceptance of office.

2026/104 Attendance and apologies

Attendees:
Cllr Stephen Long (Chair)
Cllr John Bawtree
Cllr Roger Benstead
Cllr John Bimson
Cllr Gary Greenwood
Cllr Carol Potter (from minute 2026/109 following co-option)
County Cllr Annette Dunning
District Cllr Julia Ewart

Apologies for absence:
Cllr Esme Smith

In attendance:
Alison Nichols - Parish Clerk
2 members of the public

Apologies were received from Cllr Smith (at a school event). Cllr Long proposed that Cllr Smith's apologies should be accepted, Cllr Greenwood seconded this and all voted in favour.

2026/105 Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest were received.

2026/106 Requests for dispensations

No requests for dispensations were received.

2026/107 Public forum and reports from District and County Councillors

a. **To receive reports from SCC Cllr A Dunning and District Cllr. J. Ewart**

County Cllr Dunning reported that the old Peasenhall Primary School was expected to be offered at online auction on 9 December 2026 by Lambert Smith Hampton. She also discussed progress on actions identified during the Suffolk Highways site visit and agreed to arrange a joint visit, with the clerk, to residents concerning overgrown hedges before formal enforcement action was taken. The Clerk would advise the highways liaison officer of this approach and contact Cllr Dunning to arrange a time.

District Cllr Ewart reported on changes to the planning committee arrangements, feeling that where the legislation allowed some latitude in its interpretation, East Suffolk Council had not leant towards localism, and urged the Council to make detailed, material representations on applications. Any development smaller than 10 houses is very likely to be dealt with by council officers. Anything larger or more controversial could go to the planning committee but none of it members are local to the area, so they would need lobbying. She also reported on food-waste recycling, flood preparedness and the community "Cake Off", to be held in Peasenhall on 14

November 2026 from 14:00 to 16:30. Residents of 13 local parishes are invited to the Cake Off, which is an excellent opportunity to learn about local services and eat cake.

b. **The public forum:**

A member of the public asked the Council to complete and refresh the parish emergency plan in light of previous flooding. The Council confirmed this remained a priority.

Former Cllr Rowing handed over Parish Council property and records. His request to continue as the Council's representative trustee of the Church Lands Trust would be placed on the next agenda; meanwhile the existing position would remain unchanged. His request for access to his former council email account was declined, save that access could be reconsidered if required to resolve the bank mandate. He asked the Council to consult those involved before changing the Allotments Committee arrangements. He reported that the Ombudsman had opened the case.

2026/108 Approval of previous minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2026 were approved as a correct record. Cllr Long proposed this, Cllr Benstead seconded and all agreed, apart from Cllr Bawtree, who abstained.

2026/109 Co-option to casual vacancy

The minor amendments to the co-option policy and application form were approved.

Carol Potter introduced herself and outlined her community experience. Her co-option was proposed by Cllr Greenwood, seconded by Cllr Bimson and unanimously agreed by the Council. Carol Potter signed the declaration of acceptance of office.

2026/110 Progress reports

a. **Suffolk Highways site visit:** the Clerk had followed up the matters identified and awaited a response from the highways liaison officer, who has been on holiday.
b. **River channel:** the Environment Agency had completed clearance through Peasenhall towards Sibton.
c. **Hackney Road H markings:** Suffolk Highways had acknowledged the request and the locations had been reconfirmed. The residents at Sunny Cottage had been informed. Highways had indicated there was no funding to remove the redundant dropped kerbs.
d. **Cemetery trees:** three quotations were being sought for urgent works to dangerous trees. The Council approved expenditure up to **£3,000** plus VAT from reserves for essential safety work once quotations had been received. Cllr Long proposed this, Cllr Benstead seconded and it was unanimously agreed. The Clerk would obtain proposals for an ongoing tree-management scheme. Cllr Greenwood will speak to the famer about the overhanging dead larch.
e. **Water Storage and Transfer Project:** no questions had been received from councillors or the public, so PPC had not contributed to the scoping consultation. No further update was available.
f. **Community Speed Watch:** a call for volunteers would be published on the noticeboard and Facebook. Six volunteers were required; Cllr Long had volunteered, leaving five further volunteers needed. Volunteers will need to fill in applications forms and will be vetted by the police. It is possible that the police will deploy their own enforcement if Speed Watch identifies high risk areas.

2026/111 Allotments and Allotments Committee

The Council identified some problems with the current form of the Allotments Committee: there were inconsistencies in the existing terms of reference; no one had been appointed to it at the council's Annual Meeting (in contravention of the Standing Orders), and that only two people had been meeting as the Allotments Committee, despite the terms of reference mandating at least three. The committee would remain suspended until properly constituted. Cllrs Greenwood and Benstead indicated that they were willing to serve.

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The Clerk would redraft the terms of reference for consideration at the next meeting, including membership and casting-vote arrangements.

The Clerk reported that £4,059.35 of CIL funding must be spent by 28 April 2027 and that the £26,000 Sizewell C award for the allotments and open-space project had been extended by 12 months to 18 September 2027. The Clerk would send thanks for the extension.

The Council approved the proposed communal storage container, subject to review if the landowner or developer objected or if it delayed the transfer. Cllr Greenwood proposed this, Cllr Benstead seconded and all voted in favour. The Clerk was authorised to forward the proposal.

2026/112 Finance and governance

a. The end-of-September balances were reported as £40,000.23 in the current account and £37,852.96 in the savings account.
b. The Council approved adding a councillor-expenses line for section 111 spending to the budget and transferring the relevant expenditure from section 137. Cllr Long proposed, Cllr Greenwood seconded and all agreed. The second-quarter budget-versus-actual report was reviewed and noted to be in line with expectations.
c. The quarterly bank reconciliation was approved unanimously (proposed by Cllr Long and seconded by Cllr Greenwood) and was signed after the meeting.
d. The clerk updated the council on the progress with the plan to implement recommendations from the internal audit.
e. The updated schedule of payments, including the grass-cutting invoice, circulated at the meeting, was approved. Cllr Long proposed, Cllr Bawtree seconded and all voted in favour. The completed receipts and payment schedule was noted.
f. The Council unanimously approved transferring the signatory authority on the bank mandate from Barry Rowing to Cllr Stephen Long. Cllr Greenwood proposed this, Cllr Bimson seconded and all voted in favour. The Clerk would confirm the arrangements for the former signatory's card and PINsentry device.
g. The schedule of Parish Council meetings for 2027 was approved: the third Wednesday of each month, excluding August and December, in the Assembly Hall. Cllr Long proposed this, Cllr Bawtree seconded and all voted in favour. Cllr Potter will ensure that they are booked.
h. The Clerk presented a prioritised schedule of required and recommended policies. Cllr Benstead would assist with the cemetery, tree and asset-management scheme; Cllr Long would review the data-protection work.
i. The co-option policy was agreed at item 2026/109.
j. Draft financial regulations, financial risk register, internal controls statement and reserves policy were received for review and decision at the next meeting. The clerk will also email digital copies to councillors. The placement of reserves in the savings account would also be considered then.
k. The spending limit on dangerous trees was agreed at item 2026/110(d).
l. The Council agreed to donate **£100** to the Poppy Appeal. This was proposed by Cllr Long and seconded by Cllr Potter. Cllr Bimson will represent the council at the War Memorial on 11th November if he is free; if not, Cllr Long will attend.

2026/113 Planning

No new planning applications or notifications had been received. The Council noted the importance of framing representations in material planning terms under the revised committee arrangements.

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2026/114 Christmas arrangements

The Christmas-tree event would be held on Sunday 6 December 2026, subject to final arrangements. Cllrs Greenwood and Long would put up the tree at the junction of Sibton Road and Chapel Street. Permission would be sought from the occupiers of The Cottage to use the electricity supply. Cllr Potter would book the hall.

A total budget ceiling of **£400** was approved for the 12' tree (to be purchased by Cllr Greenwood), electricity contribution **(£50)** and refreshments. This was proposed by Cllr Long, seconded by Cllr Greenwood and unanimously agreed. Cllr Long would approach Weavers in the first instance for mince pies and sausage rolls, while drinks would be purchased on a sale-or-return basis where possible. It was noted that it might be necessary to replace the Christmas lights.

At this point Cllr Long proposed extending the meeting by 30 minutes: all agreed.

2026/115 Housing needs survey

No update was available in Cllr Smith's absence.

2026/116 Communications

The Council agreed to establish a WhatsApp group for urgent or important Council communications only. The Clerk would collect members' mobile numbers and create the group. This was proposed by Cllr Long, seconded by Cllr Greenwood and agreed by all.

The Clerk was authorised to post factual public-information notices from reputable bodies on the Council's Facebook page without separate prior approval. Cllr Long would arrange transfer of the Facebook administration details from the former Chair.

2026/117 Matters for information

Cllr Long reported on the Fraud, Community-policing and Neighbourhood Watch forum held in Saxmundham on 6 October. Relevant fraud-prevention information would be displayed.

Fraud prevention measures that Cllr Long noted included:

- Truecaller, a spam-blocking app, which works on landlines and mobiles
- Suffolk Trusted Trader
- Ask Silver, which checks for scams
- And the phone number 159, a secure way to contact your bank if you suspect a scam call.

The clerk will put a flyer on the noticeboard.

The Council noted that the local police could be contacted through the Suffolk Police website (the Your Area section, which is Framlingham and Yoxford), which might be quicker than using 101, and that officers would attend Parish Council meetings only when invited to discuss a specific issue. The possibility of a parish-wide Neighbourhood Watch scheme could be considered in future. Crime in Neighbourhood Watch areas is typically 20% lower.

The Council discussed the temporary Sizewell traffic signs. The Clerk had previously asked Suffolk County Council why the Parish Council had not been consulted, as had been agreed during the highways site visit, and was awaiting a response.

2026/118 Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 18 November 2026 at 19:00 in the Assembly Hall.

Meeting closed: 21:15. Minutes signed as correct:

Alison Nichols, Parish Clerk/RFO Date:

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Payments requiring authorisation					October	2026		
Date	**Vr No**	**Supplier**	**Item**	**Gross**	**VAT**	**Net**	**Comment**	**Power**
30/09/2026	34.26	Alison Nichols	Salary - September 2026	£378.30	£0.00	£378.30		LGA 1972, s112
21/10/2026	36.26	Alison Nichols	Clerk's Expenses	£24.00	£0.00	£24.00	see clerk's expenses sheet	LGA 1972, s112, s111
28/09/2026	35.26	SALC	Payroll Provision - 1 year	£122.40	£20.40	£102.00	invoice no 31893	LGA 1972, s111
04/10/2026	37.26	Peasenhall Assembly Hall	Room Hire Oct	£24.00	£0.00	£24.00	Invoice no 539	LGA 1972, s111
19/10/2026	38.26	David Kindred	Grass Cutting	£198.00	£0.00	£198.00	invoice no PPC-4-26	Open Spaces Act 1906, s10
Total				**£746.70**	**£20.40**	**£726.30**		
Initialled by:								
		Chair PPC		**Date:**				
All invoices and payments listed above have been examined, verified and certified by the RFO, Alison Nichols								
Signed:						**Date:**		

Payments and Receipts transacted since the last Peasenhall Parish Council meeting				
Date	**Receipt**	**Payment**	**From/To**	**Item**
30/09/2026	£6,786.30		East Suffolk Council	2nd precept instalment
06/10/2026		£378.30	Alison Nichols	Clerk's Salary August
06/10/2026		£48.00	Alison Nichols	Clerk's expenses July and August
06/10/2026		£24.00	Peasenhall Assembly Hall	Hall Hire September
06/10/2026		£58.14	Barry Rowing	Safety measures for cemetery
06/10/2026		£17.97	Barry Rowing	Signs for cemetery

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