PEASENHALL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Peasenhall Parish Council Meeting
held at the **Assembly Hall on Wednesday 16 September 2026 at 19:00**

2026/89 Attendance and apologies

Attendees:
Cllr Barry Rowing (Chair)
Cllr Stephen Long (Vice-chair)
Cllr Roger Benstead
Cllr Gary Greenwood
Cllr Esme Smith
District Cllr Julia Ewart

Apologies for absence:
Cllr John Bawtree
Cllr John Bimson
County Cllr Annette Dunning

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

Cllr Rowing asked the clerk to write to SALC for clarification about the last day the agenda can be issued for a Wednesday meeting, and then, if a conflicting view is found, to write to the East Suffolk Council Monitoring Officer for his confirmation.

Apologies were received from Cllr Bawtree (working abroad) and Cllr Bimson. Cllr Long proposed that the apologies should be accepted but noted that Cllr Bimson had not provided a reason for absence. Cllr Rowing seconded the proposal and all voted in favour.

County Cllr Dunning also sent her apologies.

2026/90 Declarations of Interest

None

2026/91 Requests for Dispensation

None

2026/92 Public Forum

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

The August and September reports from SCC Cllr Dunning and the September report for ESC Cllr Ewart had already been circulated to councillors and will be available on PPC website.

Cllr Ewart first spoke about her enjoyable visit to the Great Blakenham recycling plant and then asked for feedback about the local bin collections. She felt that these should be rescheduled using local knowledge and will enquire at the next full council meeting how much the changeover to the new system is costing.

She also raised the issue of people living locally in caravans and lodges losing their accommodation in favour of people working at Sizewell, and then moving on to social housing waiting lists. The councillor also commented that she felt expensive to maintain social housing stock was being sold off.

Cllr Ewart then assured the meeting that she would be looking after local interests when dealing with the Suffolk Water Recycling, Transfer & Storage (SWRTS) project and the way it intersects with other local NSIPs.

She gave an update on the wildfire in Dunwich and raised the concern that fires can affect communications equipment and that this, and the heightened risk of wildfires and how to respond to them, should be considered in risk assessments.

Finally Cllr Ewart promoted the Community Partnership 'Cake Off' which will take place in the Peasenhall Assembly Hall on 14th November in the afternoon.

b) **The public forum:**

A resident confirmed an interest in joining the council; the clerk will contact her with information about the co-option process in time for co-option at the next meeting.

Another resident mentioned two large shrubs growing in the Gull and his concerns should there be heavy rain. The clerk will contact the Environment Agency about this. Cllr Long reminded the public that they could also report problems on the Environment Agency website. The resident also questioned why social housing in a poor condition was being sold off rather than refurbishing it.

A third resident complained about a hedge encroaching on the pavement of the A1120 near the junction with Church Road. As this was discussed during an SCC Highways site visit and the parish council has already written twice to the owners, it was agreed that the clerk should seek an update from SCC on all the reported encroachments.

2026/93 Highways

a) To discuss measures, including H markings, which can be taken to improve safety on Hackney Road

Cllr Rowing outlined his solution to the problems with parking on Hackney Road. A 1982 newspaper article shared with the council at a previous meeting had revealed that the four dropped kerbs and the crossing points opposite them on Hackney Road had been installed by SCC, specifically to enable children attending the village school to cross the road. Cllr Rowing suggested that the council and Hackney Road residents write separately to SCC requesting that money arising from the sale or development of the school should be used to remove unwanted dropped kerbs as they unreasonably restrict residents' ability to use on-street parking without obstructing them, and should have been removed as a response to the school closing, as were the six 20mph speed signs and posts. The gaps in the fencing opposite could also be filled in. He suggested that the dropped kerb opposite the cemetery should be retained with an H marking, along with the one at the other end of Hackney Road, the dropped kerb outside Sunny Cottage and Rose Villas (also possibly with an H marking).

Cllr Rowing also asked Hackney Road residents with dropped kerbs and drives to allow their immediate neighbours to use them for parking on those occasions when they did not need them. He then raised the possibility of pedestrian crossing advisory signs to alert motorists, to be discussed at a later PPC meeting.

One resident expressed some scepticism that SCC would actually remove the dropped kerbs, he remarked that reinstating railings would limit his opportunities for crossing the road, and questioned the use of public money.

Another resident complained that the pavement along Hackney Road was not wide enough to accommodate pedestrians when any bins have been left out.

It was suggested that any development in the village could have a condition imposed that the developer must contribute to improving the movement of traffic through the village, possibly by widening Hackney Road to allow for two lanes of traffic and on-street parking.

Cllr Ewart congratulated everyone on having found some middle ground.

Cllr Rowing proposed that PPC write to SCC to ask them to remove the redundant dropped kerbs. This was seconded by Cllr Greenwood and agreed by a majority of the council.

Cllr Rowing then proposed that PPC write to SCC to request that H markings be installed along the dropped kerbs outside Westwood House and Sunny Cottage, with the proviso that the council check with the owners of Sunny Cottage first. Cllr Long seconded the proposal and the council agreed unanimously.

b) To discuss encroachment on Mill Hill and the Badingham Road.

PPC has already written twice to the owners on Mill Hill and the matter is now in the hands of SCC, as discussed in their recent site visit.

The clerk is to contact the resident who had complained about encroachment on the Badingham Road to ask whether he can give a precise description of where the problem is, or to meet with councillors there.

2026/94 Minutes

The minutes of the Peasenhall Parish Council Meeting held on 15th July 2026 and those of the Peasenhall Parish Council Extraordinary Meeting held on 27th July 2026 were approved as accurate (proposed by Cllr Rowing, seconded by Cllr Long and unanimously approved) and were signed by the Chair.

2026/95 To receive progress reports for information

a) Suffolk Highways Site Visit:

Cllr Rowing has re-reported some of the items covered by the site visit via the Suffolk Highways online reporting tool. Cllr Long had had no updates and therefore suggested that the clerk request updates on those outstanding matters that were to be dealt with by SCC Highways and Cllr Dunning.

The bridge parapets over Bruisyard Road and the Causeway have had some work done to them, to the timescale advised by SCC Highways during the site visit, but work has had to be paused while capping stones are custom-made for them. The parapets are being reinstated at their original height.

b) Mabels Walk

Cllr Rowing is due to respond to the PPC solicitor with information about the secure storage planned for the allotments. A recent meeting of the Allotments Committee has decided that, following a question from the developer, plans for the storage may have to be amended. Cllr Rowing will meet the developer at the site to discuss the storage requirements.

There has been further delay concerning the ombudsman decision.

c) Encroachment on Church Road

This has now been dealt with.

d) Speedwatch equipment

This is now with Cllr Long, together with the SID equipment. Cllr Rowing has keys that he needs to pass over to Cllr Long. Cllr Long will investigate the cost of a replacement charger for the SID equipment as the current one is a fire risk. Cllr Long will also prepare an advertisement for the noticeboard and Facebook to encourage residents to volunteer for the SpeedWatch team.

e) Council winter meeting place

The Assembly Hall has been booked for the November meeting. The clerk is to advertise the dates of PPC meetings in the Yoxmere Fisherman on a quarterly basis.

f) ESC Housing Enabling Survey

Although PPC missed the deadline for submitting this survey, ESC did still accept it.

2026/96 Cemetery

a) To receive a report on a dangerous tree in the cemetery and to decide on any action to be taken

Cllr Rowing has purchased stakes and warning tape to fence off the tree behind the bench. There is a hanging branch and parts of the tree appear to have died. Other trees in the cemetery also need work. A recent webinar organised by the council's insurers highlighted the increased danger posed by trees affected by the changing weather. The clerk will contact the ESC tree officer to see whether he can advise on necessary work.

Cllr Rowing proposed, and Cllr Greenwood seconded, that the council should appoint an arboriculturist to survey the trees in the cemetery should the ESC tree office not be able to advise.

b) To consider complaints about grass cutting in the cemetery

PPC had received complaints from two residents about grass cutting in the cemetery. Cllr Rowing explained that the council balances biodiversity with the needs of relatives visiting and tending graves. The council consults the Suffolk Wildlife Trust and Caring for God's Acre for advice. There are five separate grass cutting contracts during the year to allow for growing condition variations, plus a community grass raking event which was poorly attended this year. Cllr Rowing proposed that the complaints be borne in mind when drawing up a policy for biodiversity early 2027 which would then inform the grass cutting contracts. The council would take advice from suitably qualified organisations. This approach was generally agreed.

The current contractor has a strong track record when it comes to preserving biodiversity in the cemetery and stopped cutting when he saw the pheasant's nest that had triggered the complaints. In future the contractor will be asked to walk the area before cutting it.

2026/97 Finance and Governance

a) The bank balances as at 30.08.2026 were confirmed by the RFO: Current Account: £33,213.93, Savings Account: £37,754.13.
b) The attached payment Authorisation for Payment schedule was approved. This was proposed by Cllr Long, seconded by Cllr Greenwood and approved unanimously by the council. The schedule of receipts and payments was noted.
c) The clerk reported that the problem with payments to the Assembly Hall being bounced back had been solved by using updated payment details. A second problem, that of payments going through without authorisation by a councillor, appeared to have been resolved after discussing the matter with Barclays. Only two low value transactions had been affected. Barclays had advised that interest payments due at the weekend or on bank holidays will now be paid on the next working day.
d) The clerk had followed up with One Suffolk who provide the council's email service. They have confirmed that the emails dating from before 18th May that have disappeared were only backed up by their suppliers for two weeks and so have been definitely lost with no further explanation. It was agreed that the matter was now closed and that the clerk would now regularly back up the emails to her own laptop. Clarification was to be sought as to the backup service provided by One Suffolk and advice taken from SALC as to what would be appropriate. Cllr. Julia Ewart suggested that more than 2 weeks of back-up will be required.
e) The clerk reported that she had found copies of the electoral role going back several years in the filing system – these have now been securely destroyed.

f) The clerk reported that the Data Use and Access Act 2025 requires the council to have a data protection complaints policy. She also reminded councillors that any personal data concerning unsuccessful applicants for the role of clerk should now be destroyed.
g) The council approved the purchase of the Internal Audit mentoring service offered by SALC for the RFO at a cost of £150 + VAT. This was proposed by Cllr Rowing, seconded by Cllr Greenwood and carried unanimously.

At this point the meeting was adjourned for 5 minutes while the Chair left the room.

h) Discussion of policies. The Chair requested that the clerk updates and dates all the policies on the website. It was agreed that in future, when the council decides to develop or update a policy, it should, at that point, determine who will be involved in that process. These people might have a particular interest in or knowledge of the subject.

At this point Cllr Rowing proposed that the meeting be extended for half an hour. This was generally agreed.

i) The clerk is to bring a list of policies that for legislation purposes, need updating or developing, in order of priority, to the next meeting. This will include a new donations policy, which will have a lower priority and the Chair will forward a template for this to the Clerk. The clerk and the Chair will have a Teams meeting to discuss updates to the Financial Regulations.
j) An update to the plan to correct omissions identified by the internal auditor was approved by the council. This was proposed by Cllr Long and seconded by Cllr Greenwood. Cllr Rowing abstained; everyone else voted in favour. The update included adding an 'owner' column to the layout, changing the completion date for some changes and delaying the review of the Standing Orders until the NALC review has been completed.
k) Clerk's correspondence: the Chair explained that any roads or signage problems should be reported to SCC Highways by residents using the SCC online reporting tool but that anything already covered by the PPC site visit could be raised directly with the person concerned by the Clerk.

2026/98 Planning

a) **DC/26/2890/LBC -** The Ancient House, Church Street, Peasenhall, Saxmundham, Suffolk IP17 2HL - Listed Building Consent - Replacement of existing rear window. The council had no objection to this application.
b) ESC Town and Parish Forum – Cllr Rowing gave a brief report covering the following points: there is going to be a second Call for Sites as there had not been enough proposed in the first round; the new National Planning Policy Framework provides for a more rules-based approach to decision making, with most applications that PPC would be consulted on being decided by council officers (Schedule 1 applications). However, it was stressed that the opinions of parish councils would still be important to the planning process. There will now only be one planning committee in East Suffolk, which will decide on those Schedule 2 applications not thought suitable to be determined by officers. Overall, there will be a greater emphasis on the environment but less on localism. There is a new ESC CIL website which the clerk will consult to check Peasenhall's CIL fund. There was a poor return rate for the Local Plan Scoping Questionnaire: PPC was one of the councils which had managed to submit one.
c) Northern Transport Forum – meeting notes are available online. Willow Marsh Lane is now open and the Yoxford roundabout is complete. From November there will be four trains a night on the improved Sizewell line, each carrying 40 containers. Crossing waiting times will be between three and five minutes. From 24th October there will be a replacement bus service for a week between Ipswich and Darsham. Cllr Rowing has contacted David Peacop of SZC, asking for information about traffic signage that might be installed in Peasenhall.

2026/99 Suffolk Water Recycling Transfer and Storage

Once the slides and recording of the ESC webinar about the scoping consultation for the project's environmental statement have been released, the clerk is to send them round to the council. Any councillors who want to make comments should send them to Cllr Long. The deadline for PPC comments to be submitted is 2nd October.

2026/100 Housing Needs Survey

Cllr Long and Cllr Smith have looked at the survey used by another village but felt strongly that there were too many financial questions. They felt that suitable questions for Peasenhall would include the types of housing thought to be needed in Peasenhall and possibly an idea of people's budgets, but nothing too detailed. They proposed removing some of the questions to make it more user-friendly, increase the return rate and ensure that the answers maintain anonymity.

Cllrs Long and Smith will provide the council with the list of questions, showing those they recommend removing. They will also consider methods of distributing the survey.

2026/101 Confidential Matters

The meeting was closed to the public to discuss confidential matters.

2026/102 The next meeting will be on Wednesday 21 October 2026 at 7 pm in the Assembly Hall.

The meeting closed at 9.35 pm.

Alison Nichols — Minutes signed as correct:

Parish Clerk/RFO — Date:

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Payments requiring authorisation					September	2026		
Date	**Vr No**	**Supplier**	**Item**	**Gross**	**VAT**	**Net**	**Comment**	**Power**
31/08/2026	30.26	Alison Nichols	Salary - August 2026	£378.30	£0.00	£378.30		LGA 1972, s112
16/09/2026	31.26	Alison Nichols	Clerk's Expenses	£48.00	£0.00	£48.00	see clerk's expenses sheet	LGA 1972, s112, s111
29/08/2026	29.26	Peasenhall Assembly Hall	Hall Hire 16/09/2026	£24.00	£0.00	£24.00	invoice no 532	LGA 1972, s111
12/08/2026	28.26	David Kindred	Grass Cutting	£270.00	£0.00	£270.00	Invoice no PPC-3-26	Open Spaces Act 1906, s10
05/09/2026	32.26	Barry Rowing	Cemetery Signs	£17.97	£0.00	£17.97		Open Spaces Act 1906, s11
05/09/2026	33.26	Barry Rowing	Cemetery Safety Barrier	£58.14	£9.69	£48.45		Open Spaces Act 1906, s12
Total				**£796.41**	**£0.00**	**£786.72**		
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**
07/09/2026	£98.83		Barclays	Interest
25/08/2026		£24.00	Peasenhall Assembly Hall	Hall hire
17/08/2026		£270.00	David Kindred	Grass cutting
03/08/2026		£378.30	Alison Nichols	Clerk's salary July
03/08/2026		£284.40	SALC	Internal Audit fee
03/08/2026		£125.00	Barry Rowing	Chair's expenses
03/08/2026		£60.00	SALC	Training
03/08/2026		£68.99	Alison Nichols	Clerk's expenses June
03/08/2026		£378.30	Alison Nichols	Clerk's salary June

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