MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF HINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL IN THE LINCOLN HALL ON TUESDAY 03 FEBRUARY 2026. THE MEETING WILL COMMENCE AT 7.30pm.

Present
Cllr Thompson – Chair
Cllr Anthony, Cllr Beech, Cllr Dunnett, Cllr Eldridge, Cllr Hardy Cllr Margand, Cllr Roberts
Clerk – Ali Doe
There were two members of public present, including County Cllr Dewsbury.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Amey (unwell), Cllr Christien (family commitment). These apologies were considered and accepted by the Council. Apologies were also received from District Cllr Woolliscroft.

2. Public participation session

Members of the public may make a statement or ask a question of not more than three minutes duration
The public are invited to give their views and questions to the Town Council on items on the agenda or raise issues including those for the consideration of inclusion at future meetings.

(Matters that are confidential or commercially sensitive may not be addressed in public, this includes personnel matters)
If an item is not on the agenda no decision can be made at this meeting. Public Participation will be generally limited to 15 minutes duration

A member of the public raised concern regarding the amount of litter in the verges and ditches, concern was also raised that fly-tipping seemed to be increasing.

Concern was raised from a Cllr regarding the placement of the 20/30mph speed limit sign (making the speed limit unenforceable), Baxter Road/Hardingham Street/Bond Street, concern was also raised regarding the lack of HGV signage at the end of Hardingham Street for route onto Baxter Road /Bond Street.

3. Declarations of interests with regard to items on the agenda and to consider requests for dispensations

There were no declarations of interest.

4. To agree a Chairman to preside over any agenda items of this meeting, if both the Chairman and Vice Chair are unable to preside due to (agenda item 1) Apologies for absence and /or (agenda item 3) Declarations of interests

Cllr Thompson confirmed he would Chair all agenda items.

5. To consider any applications for Co-option onto the Town Council (1 vacancy)

(An individual Co-opted will take office at the next Town Council meeting)
The Clerk confirmed that there were no applications for co-option.

6. To agree the accuracy of the Minutes of the Town Council meeting of 06 January 2026

The minutes were forwarded to all Cllrs prior to meeting. The minutes were agreed as correct and signed by the Chair.

7. Matters arising from the Minutes of the Town Council meeting 06 January 2026 (and other updates contained in a written Clerks report circulated prior to the meeting)

See appendix A
In addition to the written report the Clerk advised that:

- The failed street light in St Andrews Close requires replacing as the column is cracked and has asked the contractor to undertaken this.

- The planters installed (with the bollards) by NCC, at the Norwich Street bend have been done so in liaison with the householder whose property was hit by a car, and an agreement has been made regarding the maintenance of the planters, as advised by the householder, NCC had not given any updates to the Clerk regarding this.
- The pole has been installed for the electronic bus timetable in the Market Place.

8. Working Party Reports

The Highways and Environment Working Party reported as follows:

- A volunteer member of the working party has stepped down, the Working Party agreed that a new member was not needed at this time, to be re visited when a new project is anticipated.
- Noted that the HTE working party previously identified their priorities for the most achievable improvements, listed below:

    1. Parking restrictions/double yellow lines on Dereham Rd, Bond Street/Baxter Rd (in part), Copper Lane/Rear of Market Place, south green in Market Place, Hall Lane (top junction with B1108)
    2. One Way system in Baxter Rd/Bond Street
    3. Disabled Bays in Market Place
    4. Some marked parking bays to try to prevent double parking

- The vehicle incident recording continues, but there is concern that the working party is not aware of all incidents therefore a FOI request will be made to Norfolk Police and NCC

- The working party noted the progress of the NCC Parish Partnership funding (2025/26) for 2 projects
    - for a collision avoidance flashing speed sign at the Fairland Junction (previously discussed by the HTE working party as Wig Wag sign) and;
    - for a feasibility study into the potential for a pedestrian priority crossing point on the Fairland.

  However, since the award was made NCC have advised that the collision avoidance sign would not be permitted with "vehicle turning" information without Department for Transport permission, an application for this would be £5000 which the Town Council would have to cover, (with a refund of half if the application was successful). NCC are quoting 2 "injury accidents" at the crossroads. The Town Council had concluded that NCC would not make a positive application to DFT, so an application would be likely to fail, so have asked NCC to provide information on what would be permitted on a VAS collision avoidance sign scheme.

- The working party noted that Ladies Meadow is allocated for "community uses" , including car park, in the now adopted Hingham Neighbourhood Plan. The Town Council now has to negotiate with the diocese regarding the land (and land attached to the former rectory, for pedestrian access) to be able to progress the long term vision.

- Attleborough Road (following the accidents at the cemetery), NCC have provided a chevron sign, SLOW was written on the road but re surfacing has taken place and the SLOW has not been replaced, no further communication regarding a speed limit review.

- Parking Monitoring notes
    - parking on Dereham Rd up to junction continues even if spaces are available in the Market Plac,. social media posts show frustration locally regarding this
    - Although businesses in the Market Place should not place 'A' frames stating "customer Parking" it does seem to keep these spaces free for short term parking
    - Parking congestion in the Market Place seems to be reduced on occasions, however it was noted that parking on the B1108 carriageway recently took place (presumed an event on somewhere) and that lorries/tractors are parked on B1108 carriageway/pavement in the Market Place, to "pop" into shops.
    - Concern raised about parking outside the pub making it dangerous for pedestrians to get between the end of the pavement at Bond Street to Pavement by bus shelter. The group

suggested that a painted line scheme could be introduced (on edge of parking area) to define an area for pedestrian priority.

- MP George Freeman has again claimed to be working with "Authorities" to provide a car park in Hingham and resolve parking issues. The group agreed to invite Mr Freeman to meet the group to discuss the need for a car park and control parking in some areas of the highway (as per double yellow line proposals).

- The group re-evaluated the previous suggested double yellow line proposal to take forward to Norfolk County Council and agreed to include the B1108 Fairland in this proposal to prevent parking displacement from Dereham Road affecting the B1108. The group agreed to put forward a formal suggestion of a one way system for Bond Street/Baxter Road.

9. Reports from representatives on external bodies/ attendees of external meetings/training

Hingham Playing Field Association, Cllr Roberts reported that he had stepped down from the HPFA, Cllr Hardy confirmed she was happy to continue as Town Council representative. The new website will be up and running soon. There will be a committee meeting held to go through the new constitution, the Town Council should be able to retain the right to appoint a trustee, the constitution will need to go through legal process to transfer the charity.
Sponsorship boards are to be installed on the play area fence and sports hall balcony, to enable fundraising via local businesses.
Fundraising continues via crown funding and donations, to raise funds for repairing the sports hall floor, unfortunately the Sport England grant application was unsuccessful due to insufficient trustee numbers.
Work at the Welcomme Space is complete, a maintenance contract is quoted as costing £950 per year for 2 visits , full inspection and replacements of small parts, tensioning of zip wire, checking all bolts and reporting any works required.
It has been decided to postpone a Welcomme Space open day event until Easter when hopefully the weather will be better.
The Council offered sincere and grateful thanks to Cllr Hardy for all of her hard work in ensuring the success of the project to regenerate the play areas.

Meeting with District Cllr Woolliscroft, Cllr Thompson and Cllr Roberts reported a productive meeting with District Cllr Woolliscroft. It was acknowledged that Hingham has been neglected in terms of investment, town centre regeneration and protecting the conservation area (or enhancing it as per the suggestions in the 2016 SNC review of the Hingham conservation area). Support was requested in terms of highway issues including parking, and restoring the library service in Hingham. It was requested that evidence be gained from the refuse lorries crew regarding their difficulties accessing areas of the town due to the presence of parked vehicles.
Concerns were raised regarding ongoing issues with dog fouling and a lack of street cleaning/ street sweeping.

(note any other correspondence received prior to the meeting may also be included)

10. General Correspondence (information/circulars etc)

10.1 Hingham Tennis, oak tree next to the tennis court.
10.2 South Norfolk Council, Town & Parish Forum - 10th February 2026
10.3 South Norfolk Council, Neighbourhood Plan Projects

11. Correspondence (not for public inspection) as addressed directly to Hingham Town Council (from residents etc. and may contain personal information)

11.1 Church Clock – offer of clock maintenance
11.2 Resident – Closure of Hingham Library

12. To discuss and agree any required responses/actions in relation to any item(s) of correspondence

12.1 Ref: 10.1 Cllr Hardy will reply to advise that the Tennis Club can arrange for light trimming to take place of branches rubbing on the chain link fence. Trimming around flood lights will take place when the dead wood is removed from the crown.

12.2 Ref 11.1 The Clerk to reply to thank for the offer and advise that an inspection of the clock would be welcome but costs for any work required would need to be considered by the Council prior to the work being undertaken.

13. District Councillor's report

District Cllr Wooliscroft had given apologies and was not present at the meeting.
County Cllr Dewsbury gave a brief update on the progress of the plans for a unitary authority, advising that the elections for mayor had been postponed until 2028 and the elections for Councillors to make up the unitary authority should take place in 2027.
The District Council want a three authority model whereas the County Council want a one authority model, the Government decision may be known by the end of March.

14. County Councillor's report

County Cllr Dewsbury had sent a written report prior to the meeting (as follows) and out lined the points:

Highways

Norfolk County Council maintains 6,000 miles of roads in Norfolk. The Government grant for Highways maintenance will increase from £56 million in 2025/26 to £83 million by 2029/30. This will help fill the potholes and provide resurfacing work to prevent them.

Libraries

Throughout February Norfolk Libraries will be hosting their annual DigiFest for the seventh year running. DigiFest is part of Norfolk County Council's digital inclusion strategy which helps hundreds of children and young people, up to the age of 16, develop skills and learn stop-motion animation, basic coding with robots and AI skills via free events in libraries. More than 500 children took part last year.

Fire Service cadets

The Fire Service is planning to open another Fire Cadet Unit in Fakenham adding to the three currently run in Diss, Hunstanton and Wymondham. The units enable 13 – 17 year olds to get an idea of the work and training undertaken by firefighters.

Body cameras

Each of the Fire Services fire appliances and operational officers have been provided with a body worn camera for use at incidents. They include location data and two way communication with the control rooms to enable quicker, better informed, decision making during complex incidents.
Trading Standards has also provided it's officers with body cameras for use during investigations.

Education

The Government has agreed to provide funding for two new SEND schools, one in Downham Market and one in Gt Yarmouth. This will ensure that local children with special needs do not have to travel so far to go to school.

Devolution

There has been a lot of preparation going on for Devolution but the Government decided to postpone the election of a Mayor to take overall control of Norfolk and Suffolk until 2028. They were originally going to be elected in May this year, 2026. The election of members of the Unitary Councils that will work with the Mayor and replace the County and District Councils will still take place next year, 2027.
In 2024 we agreed to be part of the Devolution Priority Programme because it would have provided £20 million a year. The Government has now decided the funding for Devolution will be less but we are continuing to prepare for that and Local Government Reform. The Government has decided to cancel our election which was postponed until this year as the Council will cease to exist in 2028.

15. To note Planning Decisions

15.1 2025/3900 Apple Tree (A1) and Silver Birch (S1) - cutting down/felling in order to optimise the parking on the driveway at the Property, and create a sufficient and safe turning space.
Mistletoe Cottage 4 Pitts Square Hingham Norfolk NR9 4LD. No objections.

15.2 2025/3555 Remove secondary staircase from kitchen to landing on first floor, includes removal of non load bearing wall.
3 Hardingham Street Hingham Norfolk NR9 4JB. Approval with Conditions.

15.3 2025/1702 Change of use of agricultural land to C3 Residential amenity space

Land West Of Boundary House Hardingham Road Hingham Norfolk. Approval with Conditions.

16. Planning Applications (as notified by SNC for consultation)

please see the South Norfolk Council website for up to date details of planning applications
https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/planning

16.1 2026/0090 - Variation of condition 2 (hours of use) of existing application 2024/3508 (Retrospective erection of two outbuildings, one for a grocery store and one for storage) dated 29/12/2025 - To open at 8:30am Monday to Saturday
8 Bond Street Hingham Norfolk NR9 4HA
It was noted that the current condition is for a 9am opening and the application is to vary that condition to allow an 8.30am opening for the grocery store. It was agreed to support the application.

17. Information regarding other planning applications where the Town Council is not a consultee, (for information only)

Noted.

17.1 2026/0097 T1. Tilia sp. re pollard this lime tree on the corner of the drive to the level it has been pollarded to before T1. Tilia sp. re pollard to previous level, T2. Ilex. remove all branches overhanging the boundary and the neighbours roof, T3. Taxus. raise the canopy on this yew, removing the lower branches to a height of 4m, T4. Taxus. remove the branches of this yew that overhang the sorbus, T5. Taxus. remove the central leading branch, T6-T7. Taxus. canopy raise these yew trees to a height of 4m, T8, T9, T10. Taxus. cut back to trunk branches that are over hanging the boundary wall and the neighbours roof, T11. aesculus. remove the branch to allow the walnut to grow, T12, T13, T14. Sambucus. remove these elder trees, T15. cotinus. remove the branch to allow Crataegus to grow.
2 Dereham Road Hingham Norfolk NR9 4HU

17.2 2026/0036 SYCAMORE - height of the tree is approx. 18m. The branches extend 7.5 to 8m from the bole so an overall spread of approx. 16m. Reduce by 1.5-2m
1 Hardingham Street Hingham Norfolk NR9 4JB

17.3 2025/3888 Oak Tree 1 - remove
25 Hardingham Street Hingham Norfolk NR9 4JB

18. To note/discuss the closure of Hingham Library and agree any actions

It was noted that the Library was closed without warning on 13th January, and Norfolk County Council had issued the following statement via social media, " Hingham Library is currently unable to open. We've identified an issue with the flooring and need to carry out detailed building surveys". It was noted that many residents had verbally asked the Clerk or Cllrs when the library was re-opening and there is much concern locally that the closure will be permanent.

The concerns raised were directed to County Cllr Dewsbury as below:
There has been no further updates from NCC, and no indication of when the survey would be undertaken, it appears nothing had been done (other than the library being emptied) in the 3 weeks since the library closed. NCC have not directly communicated with the Town Council regarding the closure.

There has been no commitment from NCC that Hingham will retain a full library service.

The Town Council did not consider a lesser service provided by a mobile library would be an acceptable substitute and the concern was that if a mobile library was introduced on a "temporary " basis that this would become permanent instead of having a dedicated library building in the town.

NCC has not invested in the up keep of the library building, it has been neglected.

NCC have used the building for many years and therefore have full knowledge of its fabric, there has been no forward planning to enable a replacement building should this be necessary.

The needs of the Hingham community are being ignored, the library is well used and hosts events for children, is a warm space and offers opportunity for individuals to meet including elderly and lonely, with internet access and printing facilities (the only publicly available photocopying service in Hingham). In comparison, there is much publicity regarding the new library for Kings Lynn (which is reportedly greatly over budget) and a planned £1m refurbishment of Millenium Library because it is 25 years old.

NCC seem to fail to recognise the extent of the area that is served by Hingham Library, which includes Great Ellingham (which had extensive house building), Wicklewood, Carbrooke, Deopham, and several other outlying villages.

It was suggested that the vacant shop in the Market Place should be explored as an alternative, as should the placement of a purpose built container which could be placed at the rear of the Lincoln Hall car park, if the current building cannot be brought back into use. The Hingham Neighbourhood Plan demonstrates the Town Council's commitment to the provision of a new community building in the future which could accommodate a new library space, (although noted this would be some years away), and therefore NCC must ensure that the town does not lose its library service in the interim, or be left with a lesser service by the provision of a mobile library.

19. Confirmation of the date of Councillor training 24 March 2026

Noted.

Policy Review

20. To consider any amendments needed to the Norfolk ALC recommended IT Policy and adopt the Policy

The Clerk advised that an IT policy was now required as part of Assertion 10, for which a declaration would be required as part of the AGAR (external audit) process. The Clerk advised that there was a NALC policy template and a Norfolk ALC template, and that the Norfolk ALC template was more suitable for Hingham Town Council's needs. The Clerk had forwarded the policy to all Cllrs prior to the meeting, highlighting any amendments, the Council agreed to adopt the policy.

21. To consider adoption of the NALC Data Protection Policy (replacing the existing Hingham Town Council policy) agreeing any amendments needed

The Clerk advised that the NALC policy template was more up to date and suitable for Hingham Town Council's needs. The Clerk had forwarded the policy to all Cllrs prior to the meeting, highlighting any amendments, the Council agreed to adopt the policy.

22. To Review the Hingham Town Council Privacy Statement

The Clerk had forwarded the Privacy Statement to all Cllrs prior to the meeting, the Council agreed that no amendments were necessary.

23. To review the Information Audit

The Clerk had forwarded the information audit document to all Cllrs prior to the meeting, highlighting any amendments, the Council agreed the document as presented.

24. To consider adoption of the NALC Equality and Diversity Policy agreeing any amendments needed

The Clerk advised that the NALC policy template was suitable for Hingham Town Council's needs. The Clerk had forwarded the policy to all Cllrs prior to the meeting, the Council agreed to adopt the policy.

25. To Review the Hingham Town Council Complaints Policy and Procedure

The Clerk had forwarded the policy to all Cllrs prior to the meeting, the Council agreed that no amendments were necessary.

26. To Review the Hingham Town Council Filming and Recording of Meetings Policy

The Clerk had forwarded the policy to all Cllrs prior to the meeting, the Council agreed that no amendments were necessary.

27. To review Standing Orders

The Clerk advised that the NALC standing orders template had been updated. The Clerk had forwarded this to all Cllrs prior to the meeting, highlighting any amendments (where permitted) to ensure the Standing Orders were compatible with the previous changes to Standing Orders reflecting Hingham Town Council's requirements, the Council agreed the Standing Orders as presented.

FINANCE

28. To note permitted S137 Expenditure 2026/27

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has confirmed the appropriate sum for the purposes of section 137(4)(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 for parish and town councils in England for the financial year 2026/27.

In a letter to sector partners, Lizzy Hawkins, Deputy Director for Communities, Governance and Institutions at MHCLG, confirmed that the new limit will be £11.60 per elector, which represents an increase from the 2025/26 figure of £11.10

The Clerk advised that Section 137 of the Act allows parish and town councils to incur expenditures for purposes that benefit their communities when no specific statutory power is available, and the amount set is the maximum amount per government elector for the year 2026/27.

29. To note the suggested date for the next Finance committee meeting, 17 March 2026

Noted.

30. To agree and approve the accounts for payment (as below)

The Clerk forwarded copies of the invoices to all Cllrs prior to the meeting, the accounts for payment will agreed as below and the cheques were signed.

REF	PAYEE	DETAILS		AMOUNT		VAT
767	STAFF	WAGES		£1,159.98		
768	STAFF	WAGES		£1,640.72		
dd	NEST	PENSION		£232.78		
769	HMRC	TAX/NI		£765.48		
770	LINCOLN SOCIAL CENTRE	HALL HIRE		£40.50		
771	NORFOLK PARISH TRAINING AND SUPPORT	COUNCIL TRAINING		£444.00		£74.00
772	OFFICE FLOW	METERED PRINTING		£39.48		£6.58
773	COZENS (UK) LIMITED	STREET LIGHT MAINTENANCE		£150.00		£25.00
dd	SSE	STREET LIGHT ENERGY		£1,749.53		£291.59
dd	SSE	ENERGY PUBLIC TOILETS		£87.40		£4.17
774	PCC	ENERGY FOR CHURCHYARD FOOTWAY LIGHTING		£60.00		
775	RURAL SERVICES PARTNERSHIP LTD	RURAL MARKET TOWN GROUP MEMBERSHIP 25.26		£126.00		£21.00
		TOTAL FOR ALL PAYMENTS		**£6,495.87**		
		TOTAL VAT		**£422.34**		

The meeting ended at 9.30pm. Signed ……..Chair 03 March 2026

Appendix A Clerks report for the Town Council Meeting of 03 February 2026

Matters arising from the Minutes of the Town Council meeting 06 January 2026
MIN 22 – Precept request has been sent to South Norfolk Council

Other Updates/Outstanding Issues

- Asset monitoring working group – terms of reference and assessment record forms to be written
- Fairland collision avoidance sign scheme – request for NCC to provide information on what would be an acceptable sign (other than "SLOW DOWN") and request to meet to discuss sent, no response received as yet.
- Market Place bus shelter accessibility NCC proposal, no further contact from NCC
- Letter being drafted to the Diocese regarding land at the former rectory
- quotation for skate park repairs to be arranged.
- Public toilet gate replacement being sourced (in discussion with local company), back room lock to be organised
- Office furniture to be ordered
- Contractor contacted and requested to arrange replacement of 2 high risk street light columns
- Mole catcher for cemetery required.
- New Hingham.gov.uk website now in place, and email addresses for Councillors ready to be set up, log in details have been sent.
- Highway Village Gates, installation has been completed, concerns raised with NCC regarding "Welcome to Hingham " sign location on Attleborough Road. Meeting with Highway Officer took place on 08 April, awaiting feedback on issues raised.
- Vehicle damage Incidents at the cemetery,. There insurance company of the driver from the 3rd incident has been contacted in writing an acknowledgement has now been received photos and invoices sent, awaiting response. Information has been sent to Norfolk County Council with further requests for the speed limit to be lowered. NCC have installed chevron signage, the SLOW marking was pained but has since been covered by surface dressing. NCC have indicated that a speed reduction review will take place. No further contact from NCC.
- Regarding the Hingham History Centre request for the Town Council to take over assets and funds, the Clerk has spoken with the with History Centre representative, the History Centre paperwork and items stored in the Lincoln Hall has been tidied, this has made some room for paperwork/items to be stored, collection to be arranged, funds have been confirmed as a little over £10,000 the History Centre are arranging a cheque so funds can be transferred to Hingham Town Council.
- The clerk has been in touch with SNC and will set up a zoom meeting to discuss what is needed for a Community Emergency Response Plan. Information has been sent to Cllrs, a date for meeting the relevant officer needs to be agreed.
- "Re-dedication" of the bus shelter to be organised.
- Commonwealth War Graves Commission have been invited to install signage at the cemetery
- The Clerk has asked Norfolk County Council if a grit bin for The Hops will be supported, no response.
- A suitable place for a new Town Council notice board to be established.
- Letter to the Chief Constable and the Police Crime Commissioner regarding parking drafted photographs need to be added prior to sending.
- Fairland Oak Tree stumps, advice has been sought regarding hollowing the stumps out, a suggestion has been made that a stump grinder will be required (cost approximately £500-600 per stump).
- Applications for Assets of Community Value to be finalised, plans and ownership details are required.
- Notice boards for the toilets to be purchased.
- Street Lighting with regards to possible solutions to replacing the Tally Alley light, the Clerk will meet with the contractor to discuss solar bollard lighting options
- Communications Policy, including social media policy is being worked upon. Cllrs are reminded not to comment on public social media pages making reference to themselves as Councillors, in a way that could give inaccurate information or be misleading or misconstrued as the Council having discussed and agreed something, when this is not the case. Staff/Cllr communication/relationship protocol to be drafted. .

- Extension of Cemetery Driveway and turning circle, the Clerk has spent some time in the cemetery looking at the area that would be required to extend the driveway. The area is very extensive and the clerk is concerned about the application of such a large area of tarmac , (environmental and cost). There may be other more appropriate solutions, including a shorter tarmac extension followed by “matting” under the grass surface (and possibly a tarmac path for better pedestrian/disability access), and leaving the existing grass as a driveway over the old cemetery area. Advice is needed from a funeral director with regard to vehicles used. The use of the driveway (as in frequency) for funerals is minimal therefore the grass should not become too worn from being driven on, this requires a lot of further thought to ensure the Council have a cost effective but long term solution for the future use of the cemetery .
- 2 steel liners for the Market Place bins to be ordered (liners available at a reasonable price are a slightly different size to the existing ones (by mm’s) liners of the same size have not yet been found.
- One bin on Fairland has been found – so only one replacement required, Clerk contacted the supplier (who are awaiting supply of bins)
- Commemorative Plaque for the Fairland Bus shelter and Market Place bus shelter, to be ordered

Report prepared 03 February 2026 does not include Matters Arising when the item is on the forthcoming meeting’s agenda

Crime Figures –figures for December 2025

Low Road – other theft 1
Bears Lane – Criminal damage and arson 1
Ringers Lane – other theft 1
Chapel Street – Violent and sexual offences 1
Attleborough Road- burglary 1
Greenacre Road - Violent and Sexual Offences – 1
Watton Road - Violent and Sexual Offences – 2