

OLD WESTON PARISH COUNCIL

Chair: Mr. D. Costura

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF OLD WESTON PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON

Tuesday 14th July 2026

The Meeting commenced at 7.30 pm

Councillors present: Mr. D. Costura (Chairman), Mr. A. Harding, Mr. P Patrick and Mrs. E. McKenzie

Clerk: Mrs. M. Tebbit (Temporary Clerk)

County/Disc: None present

Public: 2 members of the public were in attendance.

1. Chairmans Welcome

2. Apologies and reasons for absence:

Apologies were received from Mrs. E. Penniall and Mr T. Fussell who were away on holiday. Apologies were also received from Ms. Emma Gotts.

3. Councillor's Declaration of Interest on any item on the Agenda

There were no changes.

4. Public and press participation session with respect to items on the Agenda

Mr. F. Wing and Mr C. Hallam addressed the Council on the current situation of the Village Hall. Although it is financially robust the Village Hall Committee feel the village has too many different groups and are worried about the sustainability of this going forward. It may even be the case that the whole committee resign at the AGM in October. Would the Village Hall Committee being a sub committee of the Parish Council be a better use of facilities. They have "Friends" of the Village Hall, not on the Committee, that help out. They are not talking about the Parish Council doing extra work. Because the Constitution was set up a long time ago it should be updated. There is a Government advice paper on how to amalgamate the two organisations and events. People do not want to become Trustees of the Village Hall but do want to help but villagers do not seem to want to come to events. Mrs. McKenzie asked why the football was not being shown on the big screen in the Village Hall, Mr Wing said no one would run the bar. That is why they have events in The Swan so that less people have to work. Utilisation of the hall is up.

Mr Wing said that he would like to apply to be on the Parish Council because he is now retired and has more time and has experience and training from before. It would also help with co-operation between the two organisations.

The next event is the BBQ at The Swan.

5. Communication from District and County Councillors

Mr. Costura is going to chase both councillors up. Mr Gray is away but the Chairman is concerned that Mr. Gardiner has not attended a meeting since the previous Parish Clerk left.

6. To Approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 12th May 2026.

These were approved and signed by the Chairman.

7. Consider Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes

There were no matters arising.

8. Governance.

Nothing to report

9. Community Engagement

- i. Village Hall Update: Mr. Wing has withdrawn the request for £1300. Mr. Costura attended the Village Hall engagement meeting and explained that the Parish Council have to donate to specifics and once that is done it cannot be repeated.
- ii. Request from Village Matters for increased contribution. This Committee are concerned about the advertisement revenue and need an increased contribution. They have

proposed 20p per household per month. There are around 100 households in Old Weston so that would be £20 month for each of 12 months so £240 per year. Last year the Parish Council paid £99 so the increase is more than double. Mrs McKenzie pointed out that printing costs have risen dramatically. Producing a digital magazine had been discussed but that would exclude quite a few people. The Chairman is to go back and say that the Parish Council would be up for some increase but the sum suggested is rather too high. Mr. Patrick said he doesn't read the hard copy as he only reads digital. Mr. Harding reiterated that the idea is to get information to people who are not digital. Mr. Patrick suggested asking who wants to receive it. A vote to be taken at the next meeting.

10. Planning

- i. Walnut Tree Cottage – Retrospective Historic Changes – in progress and the Parish Council did not comment
- ii. The Willows – Extension for Garage – in progress and did not comment
- iii. The Poplars – Modernising – in progress and did not comment
- iv. Manor Farm Agricultural Buildings. Converting Barn to Transportation Hub – Approved with restrictions. The Parish Council objected.
- v. Land South of Manor Farm Agricultural Buildings. Appeal in progress. The Secretary of State rejected the Appeal and will not support the application. The letter stating this in on the HDC site.

11. Highways

- i. Everyone was in agreement to the letter to the Resident regarding drainage. It will be delivered to their door.
- ii. Highways update. The Highways Department replied as follows:
The big dip coming into the village is not a problem.
The footpath under water is Anglia Waters responsibility.
The Potholes in Brington Road have been repaired.
The broken speed limit sign is on the work list and will be completed during this financial year, i.e. before next April.
Mrs. McKenzie asked if we have a direct contact at the Highways Department and Mr. Costura replied that Mr. Gardiner was meant to supply one but had not done so yet. Mr. Harding and Mr. Costura to liaise on this.

12 Finance and Administration

- i. Ms Emma Gotts has resigned although she was given two months to consider. Mr Costura has spoken with her and is meeting her on Sunday to get the Laptop back amongst other things and arrange to get access to the bank account. Mr. Harding offered to become the responsible financial officer, liaising with the Chairman. A P45 will be issued and her salary paid for last 3 months. HMRC to be paid £104 that is due for her salary. Mr. Costura to confirm.
All agreed to find a replacement clerk. SLCC will be asked if they can advertise the position. Mr Costura will approach other council clerks.
- ii. AGAR has been filed for the year and the Audit completed.
- iii. The record will be posted on the website for public viewing
- iv. Public liability insurance to be discussed at next meeting.
- v. Mrs. Gotts had shown concern that there was no maximum amount that could be drawn from the bank account, Mrs. McKenzie said there were enough precautions in place but this could be discussed at a future meeting.
- vi. Community Infrastructure – There is nothing to put forward.
- vii. Approval was given for the following payments:

HMRC £104.60, Annual Domain charge £60, 4 months of website charges Apr – July about £48 Mr. Harding will deal with these and they will be paid by 1st August. The Chairman will copy when amounts are confirmed.

- viii. It was confirmed Chess Direct Debit has been cancelled. The only other one still standing is ICO.

13. **Any Other Business**

- i. Hedge outside The Chestnuts obstructing the pavement. The organisation in charge of maintenance for The Chestnuts have been contacted. Mrs McKenzie pointed out that although previously they reported that they cannot cut the hedge until September because of disturbing birds, this only applies to agricultural hedges.
- ii. Longlands water leak. Anglian Water have stated that the hardware involved either belongs to the Council or Householder, not them. Mr. Costura to contact the Council
- iii. Litter pick date – Mr. Patrick to organise a date and circulate round the village.

14. **Date of Next Meeting.**

The next meetings will be on 15th September and 10th November 2026.

The meeting closed at 8.19

Speeding Detection Device to be put on next agenda.