

Oxborough Parish

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 15th April 2026 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillor Allison (Chair), Neil Watson (Clerk)

Also present: Cllr S Hussey, Breckland Council and five members of the public.

Agenda Item 1: Welcome by the Chairman of Oxborough Parish Council.

Councillor Graham Allison welcomed everyone to the Oxborough Parish Meeting for 2026.

Agenda Item 2: To approve the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting on 16th April 2025.

The minutes were approved by acclaim.

Agenda Item 3: Update on issues from 2025.

No comments.

Agenda Item 4: Chairman's report.

Cllr Allison noted that 2025 had been a difficult year for the Parish Council, but the Council moves into 2026 with optimism. An experienced Clerk has been appointed and updated systems and processes introduced for compliance with new regulations.

The chair explained at some length why the Parish Precept had increased significantly this year. The Parish has historically operated on a 'shoestring', without paid staff, reserves, or funds to invest in equipment and services. That position was not sustainable, indeed it placed the existence of the Council in doubt, so the 2026/27 was set a level to allow progress during the year to a sustainable position.

A combination of unrealistically low precepts in the past, and a small number of properties in the Parish led to a % increase of over 200%, however in cash terms this equates to £80 per property for the year.

It was noted that some serious allegations had been made against individuals and the Council of financial mismanagement of the precept process. Nothing could be further from the truth; the precept process was properly handled, duly minuted and was completely transparent.

Agenda Item 5: Receive reports from village groups.

A report was read by the Clerk on behalf of Oxborough Village Hall, and reports from Hewars Charity and Oxborough Local History Group were given in person. These reports are appended to these minutes.

Agenda Item 6: Open forum for Parishioners.

No additional comments.

Chairman.....Date.....

OXBOROUGH VILLAGE HALL

Good evening, everyone.

May I start by thanking all the Trustees, friends of Oxborough Village Hall, all its volunteers and helpers, and users for your support and help throughout the year.

Thank you to all the residents and organisations of Oxborough who use our hall and all our visitors/hirers from villages further afar for all your support. We are very proud of our Village Hall and like to think that all find it a clean, welcoming and safe place to spend time together meeting and making friends old and new and thank all those who help towards keeping it so.

We sent out a message to all our residents earlier in the year requesting suggestions as to what activities they would like to see at the Village Hall. We had a few suggestions and are working towards taking up some of these ideas.

The garden is looking lovely thanks to all those who put in all the hard work to make such a welcoming place to sit and meet.

New gravel has been added to the Car park, and the toilets have also had a makeover, they look really great and would I like to thank all involved.

A vital part of our Village is the defibrillator. Our thanks go out to Tristan who monitors, maintains, and ensures our Village defibrillator is available to anyone in need.

Just a message for those who may or may not have noticed it's Oxborough Village Hall's 50th Anniversary this year so keep an eye out for some celebrations.

We have some up and coming events coming up that you may also be interested these will be added to the noticeboard, the bus stop and Bar's newsletter so keep an eye out for these events.

I close this report wishing everyone all the very best for the future and hope to see you soon.

Yours sincerely

Elaine Willies

Chairperson Oxborough Village Hall.

Chairman.....Date.....

Annual Report of Hewars Charity for the Year Ended 31st December 2025**Introduction**

Hewars Charity, operating through the Thomas Hewars Educational Charity together with the Hewars and Hammonds Charities, continues to support educational and community initiatives in Oxborough. This report summarises the principal activities and developments during the year ending 31 December 2025.

Trustees and Governance

The Trustees who served during the year were:

Mr Miles Griffin (Chair)

Mr Charles Ashley

Rev Linda Lubbe

Mr Paul Smyth

Mr Simon Willies (Hon Clerk)

Key Activities and DevelopmentsHewars & Hammonds Charities

During the year the trustees continued to oversee the management of land associated with the charity, including the collection of rent and the management of shooting rights. Part of the rent for the year remains outstanding due to the deteriorating health of the previous tenant. The charity's managing agents, Cruso & Wilkin, are taking a measured approach in resolving the matter, mindful of the potential cost of formal recovery action.

A new tenant has been identified, and arrangements have been put in place to ensure the continuation of the tenancy.

The charity also continued to work alongside the Yorkers Charity of Cockley Cley in relation to shared interests in the land.

In accordance with the charitable scheme, a share of receipts is distributed for the benefit of Oxborough Church.

Investments

The trustees continue to invest surplus funds in charity investment funds managed by Schroders, specifically the Schroders Equity Income Fund for Charities and The Growth Fund for Charities. These investments are intended to provide a sustainable level of income while maintaining the long-term value of the charity's capital.

Community Support

The charity continues its commitment to supporting community facilities and initiatives within Oxborough. The trustees previously agreed to contribute towards the maintenance of the village

Chairman.....Date.....

defibrillator located at Oxborough Village Hall, and this commitment remains in place, with a review scheduled in 2028.

During the year the trustees also made an offer of financial support to Oxborough Parish Council to assist with preparatory work connected with the proposed extension of the village burial ground. This offer has not currently been taken up by the Parish Council.

The trustees further offered financial assistance to both the Parish Council and the Village Hall Committee to support a programme of workshops on topics that would be beneficial to village residents. No response was received from the Parish Council. The Village Hall Committee has indicated interest in the proposal, and just recently trustees agreed funding for the first event.

Public Awareness and Advertising

The trustees continue to promote awareness of the charity and the availability of educational grants through several local channels including:

Bus stop notice board.

Village hall notice board.

Church notice board

Online publication through Oxborough Voice

Periodic leaflet distribution to all households in the village

Despite these efforts, the trustees note that the number of applications for grants remains limited. The trustees will continue to explore ways of raising awareness so that eligible residents can benefit from the opportunities provided by the charity.

The detailed accounts for the year can be viewed on the Charity Commission website.

Conclusion

Hewars Charity continues to fulfil its purpose of supporting education and community benefit within the parish of Oxborough. The trustees remain committed to careful stewardship of the charity's assets and to ensuring that the benefits of the charity are made available to those within the Oxborough community who may qualify.

Prepared by:

Miles Griffin, Chair

Date: 14 April 2026

Chairman.....Date.....

HISTORY GROUP 25/26

Very many thanks:

For the storage space provided for History Group use.

To all who have contributed photos, memories, objects, or snippets of information, all adding to the recorded history of our parish through time.

To those who have rallied to help with the setting up and smooth running of the 2 meetings we've held including provision and serving of refreshments.

And to Mike Craig who very kindly acts as treasurer, reporting a total of £4,010.53 compared to £3,850.53 last year, of which £3,225 is ring-fenced for printing the grant-funded book being written on the History of the parish.

For the profit we made, thanks go to the excellent speakers at our two meetings. Both live in the village, attracting a lot of interest, and good audiences [including from neighbouring areas] for their wonderfully illustrated, informative and entertaining presentations – on two very different topics.

Firstly Denis Madden – a relative newcomer to Oxborough – shared with us his fascinating life history, largely in the flower trade in and around London, and mostly centred on Columbia Road Flower Market. He showed some beautiful, floriferous photographs, including very creative bouquets and arrangements, the work of his floral designer wife, Susie.

Secondly, we had James Parry, Chair of the flourishing Breckland Society, which he founded in 2003, aiming to 'research and promote the natural, built, and social history of Breckland', which has certainly been achieved. This cause was initiated more than 100 years ago by WG Clarke (1877-1925), the subject of James Parry's presentation. Son of a Thetford printer, and educated at Thetford Grammar School – WG Clarke became a remarkable, self-taught archaeologist and naturalist of his time, renowned for his lifetime's work identifying and recording in detail – and promoting – the distinctive beauty and heritage of this very dry, sandy landscape and habitat, with its poor, but flint-rich soil, heathland, sparse woodland, flora and fauna. He was even the originator of the name Breckland/The Brecks for this particular geographical area, using it as the title of his most famous book "Breckland Wilds" published in 1925.

Coincidentally, while James Parry is better known locally as Oxborough's 'Pantomime Baddie' – Denis Madden is rapidly becoming known for his fully-costumed, singing impersonations of Elvis Presley. Both were very entertaining as well as very informative.

I've continued to maintain and grow the archives, keeping Oxborough History Group 'ticking over' while supporting and being supported by neighbouring history groups, in their various states of 'peek and trough'.

Methwold HG: I spoke about the Romans in Oxborough – just before announcement of 'The Oxborough Hoard' with its nationally significant Roman finds classified as treasure trove!

For the National Trust I led a conducted tour of the Church and Village for their volunteers, with special regard to their close links with the Bedingfeld family.

Chairman.....Date.....

For the U3A I gave a conducted tour of St John's Church, after they'd visited Oxburgh Hall.

For the Breckland Society's 2025 Christmas Social in the Church, I was asked to give a brief welcome and introduction to the history of the church.

For the Breckland Society's highly acclaimed publication "Industrious Rivers: A history of the Waterways of Breckland", I supplied archive material for the overall project and contributed several pages on the little-known Stringside Drain, a tributary of the Wissey now at great risk of losing its historic name in favour of 'Lode Dike' on recent digital maps. It is most easily seen passing under the white bridges, on the Eastmoor Road

and the Oxborough/Stoke Ferry Road, forming the western boundaries of both Oxborough's Parish Council and Breckland's District Council.

I've provided archive material to NT researchers on various topics and to Stoke Ferry History Group on specific connections between our two villages.

Regarding the book in progress on Oxborough's history, it feels so lucky that it was not completed and printed before the very recent glut of Roman and Iron Age finds, of national importance and declared Treasure Trove, found both nearby, and in Oxborough itself.

Coming up

This year's Village Hall BBQ on 15 Aug will celebrate the Village Hall building's 50th anniversary ... along with its earlier existence including a History Group display on its history

If you have any pictures, memories, mementos, stories, records, or random snippets of information – from when it was used as the cricket pavilion, for wedding receptions, parties, as the background toilet facility for the spectacular Nov 5th celebratory fireworks and bonfire, as well as more everyday use – for youth club, playgroup etc – these would be VERY WELCOME, either for display on the day, as donation to the archives or for loan for copying and returning. Thank you.

Barbara Pritchard 01366 328 730 bargeoff@yahoo.com

Chairman.....Date.....