

## APPROVED MINUTES OF THE NORTH PICKENHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD THE PAVILION ON 10th OF JUNE, 2025

Present: Chairman T. Ryan, Vice Chairman R. Parsonson, Cllr D Barrington, Cllr. M. Cousins, Cllr T Goodwin, Cllr. M Saxon and the Clerk (L Shepherd)

There were 13 members of the public

**1. Open meeting and welcome members of the public**

Chairman T Ryan opened the meeting and welcomed the members of the public

**2. To consider accepting and approving apologies for absence**

DC Fabian Eagle

**3. To approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held at The Pavilion on 7<sup>th</sup> of May, 2025**

The minutes were previously circulated and agreed upon. The minutes were further proposed as accepted by Cllr. M Cousins. Seconded by Vice Chairman R Parsonson and agreed unanimously by those present at the meeting and signed as accurate by Chairman Tom Ryan.

**4. Declarations of interests on items on the agenda and to consider any requests for dispensations**

Chairman T Ryan expressed an interest in item 6. He has chosen to abstain from voting but will take part in the discussion. He passed the meeting on to Vice-Chair R Parsonson to conduct the meeting.

**5. Adjournment for public consultation on the Proposal from North Pickenham Heritage Collection**

Mrs. Gattuso a trustee for NPHC informed the public on the particulars of the Charity Application and read the proposal aloud and opened up the floor to questions.

There were many questions and concerns from those present. There is concern that the Pavilion remains the sole asset of the village following the loss of the Pub and the precarious position of the Hub. Some feel that using the Pavilion as a Heritage Centre is not the best use of this village asset and query as to why the Pavilion has not been advertised for Club Hire/Private Hire. They feel as if the Pavilion is the centre of the village and that this proposal strips North Pickenham of that centre. Some asked if the Parish Council could potentially slow this process down in order to involve the whole population better via consultations and meetings. The main questions are as follows:

Question: If the Parish Council agree to the proposed 15-year lease, how will the village continue to be able to use the building through either small clubs or private hire?

Answer: The Parish Council will still own the building and the agreement would be that NPHC would allow any village group to use the building should they wish to do so upon agreement from the trustees.

Question: Is there a possibility that the trustees could discriminate from clubs/private hirers using the Pavilion due to the fragile nature of the equipment?

Answer: NPHC does not see this as being a future issue. There are 5 trustees who would have to unanimously agree or deny usage. Furthermore, the trustees have to answer to the Parish Council for any discrimination as the PC retain ownership of the building.

Question: Just to clarify, village groups would have to approach NPHC to request usage of the Pavilion?

Answer: Yes, as the NPHC would in a sense be taking over management of the Pavilion.

Question: How does this proposal affect potential expansion of the building?

Answer: Consideration of expansion would be written in the lease agreement. NPHC will be forbidden from expanding the building without full agreement from the Parish Council. Should the Parish Council wish to expand the building they will be free to do so as the PC retains ownership of the building.

Question: Would the proposal hinder football teams using the pavilion?

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Answer: The Pavilion in its current state hinders football teams from using the Pavilion. However, a 15-year lease is only the proposal. The Parish Council could deny that length of a lease in favour of a short one to allow for potential growth of a football team.

Question: Can trustees also be a part of the Parish Council?

Answer: Yes, legally a trustee can be a Councillor, but the Chairman of the trustees cannot also be Chairman the Parish Council. Also, the trustee should (but is not required to) declare his position as trustee as a non-pecuniary interest and refrain from voting on Charity items in Parish Council meetings.

Question: Could the Parish Council be sole trustees of the NPHC? It was raised that up till now all the money to support the NPHC has come from grants applied for by the Parish Council and the Pavilion currently stores the current collection. Why does the NPHC need to apply for Charity Status on their own?

Answer: NPHC have not explored the Parish Council being sole trustee. The proposal tonight is based off of a Charity Status Application put forward by 5 trustees which is the maximum trustee number allowed and the Charity Commission is requiring a lease between NPHC and the Parish Council to further the current application.

Question: Do the NPHC wish to become self-sufficient and how are they planning on doing so?

Answer: By holding events that directly benefit the public and those in the village, donations and book sales.

Question: What does NPHC hope to achieve through this proposal?

Answer: The hope is to bring North and South Pickenham and Houghton-on-Hill heritage to the forefront of the public eye. This project will draw people to reminisce the history of this area. The heritage of this area goes back many many years, long before the Americans of WWII. The hope is that consistent use of the Pavilion will be beneficial for the upkeep of the building as well. There are many grants available to Charities that aren't available to Parish Councils which could financially aid the expansion of the Pavilion, should the Parish Council give permission.

Question: Why does there need to be a lease? Why not just advertise the Collection as is?

Answer: The Charity Commission requires a lease. To use Swaffham Town Hall as an example, all the items belong to the Parish Council. The trustees are the curators of the items. Museum has a lease with the town hall with specifications on how the building is to be used/etc.

Question: Who will pay to have the legal lease drawn up?

Answer: It depends on the relationship between the NPHC and the Parish Council. While the Charity Commission doesn't insist on a formal lease, it might be best to utilise a solicitor. Who pays for this will need to be discussed further at a later date.

Question: When is the deadline?

Answer: End of this month but the trustees are prepared to postpone the current application. While this means a new application, this is not abnormal as it has become increasingly difficult to get an application approved by the Charity Commission.

Question: Why was the Pavilion not opened over VE Day?

Answer: There was a miscommunication over other events being held in the village.

Question: What are other red flags raised by the Charity Commission?

Answer: The Charity Commission insisted that the Collection use their own words and make it relevant to the Collection

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The second issue was clarifying what was the division between the Parish Council and the Heritage Collection. Hence the lease.

Finances was another issue as the Charity Commission requires applicants to have separate bank account prior to applying and a treasurer completely separate from the Parish Council. However, many banks refuse to open accounts for Charities unless they have a registered Charity Number already. Other smaller issues to make sure that the Charity will directly benefit the village.

Question: Can the Pickenham's Heritage Collection run without being a Charity.

Answer: Yes, but it can also be difficult to get a bank account without having charity status for this type of group and it benefits NPHC to be a registered Charity.

Question: Could the trustees be made up of all non-councillors or could the one trustee also on the PC be chosen by the PC? Or could there be a representative for the PC attend trustee meetings and report back to the PC?

Answer: Could be addressed in the future.

Question: Is Swaffham Museum funded by those paying entry fee? If so, will those visiting the Pavilion be charged? Or asked to make a donation?

Answer: Yes, Swaffham Museum charge for entry but is also supported by the Town Council and act as Tourist Information for Swaffham. The arrangement for the Pavilion would be free entry for those who live in the villages.

Question: Has the group investigated other potential locations?

Answer: Not at this time and they are unaware of any other available locations. The Hub was suggested, but is not really a secure location.

Question: What the Parish Council have to gain from this proposal.

Answer: Stability for the maintenance and use of the Pavilion. Potential grants that could go towards expansion.

Question: As the village grows, could Section 106 funds can be used for a larger village hall?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Are there people in the village in mind that will lead groups to investigate the history of the village?

Answer: It depends. There are some who know where to look for these things. Sue sees herself as lead in investigating deeper into the history of the village but anyone can be involved.

Cllr. Goodwin asked If the Parish Council specifically wish to host any function at all in the Pavilion, do they need to go through the Charity?

Answer: No, the use of the building by the PC trumps NPHC. The Parish Council own the building. There will be specifications in the lease agreement to give the PC as much control as they wish.

It was mentioned that the correlation between Swaffham Museum and the Pavilion is not quite right as the Pavilion is a much smaller building. There is concern that the Heritage Collection would take over whole room.

At this time, Vice-Chair R Parsonson adjourned the public participation and moved the meeting onto the next item.

### **6. To discuss and decide on what action North Pickenham Parish Council wish to take on the proposal from the North Pickenham Heritage Collection**

Vice-chairman R Parsonson asked the Councillors individually their stand on the Proposal.

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Cllr. D Barrington asked for clarification on if NPHC have to have a lease to move forward with the Charity Commission. The answer is yes, but they will most likely not get a lease drawn up in time for the deadline. However, one can apply for charity status several times. Cllr D Barrington stated that if the Hub folds, the Pavilion becomes Village Hall. Thus, he would vote against an extended lease as he sees this agreement as taking a village asset from the villagers.

Cllr. M Cousins said she supports the proposal going forward. She believes it would be a good village attraction and having it as a Heritage Centre would retain the Pavilion in longevity

Cllr. T Goodwin raised his concerns that this would stop the Pavilion from being used by other members of the public.

Cllr. M Saxon stated that he is of the opinion that the Heritage Collection does not need to apply for Charity Status as the Parish Council have managed and curated the Heritage Collection up to this point. The Collection belongs to the Parish Council as a whole and he sees this as giving it away. He is not confident in the future plans of the Heritage Collection and believes that the Parish Council should be the custodians of the Heritage items.

D Barrington asked the public how they would vote as this would aid his decision. 4 for, 5 against

VC R Parsonson proposed to agree to an initial 5-year lease the of the Pavilion to NPHC (lease to be agreed upon). Seconded by Cllr. M Cousins. Vote was 3-2 **FOR** with Chairman T Ryan not voting due to declaring this item as an interest. Motion carried.

At this time Cllr. M Saxon resigned and left the meeting.

Lease to be agreed upon in the future. Solicitors to be consulted. Cllr. T Goodwin stated that he wishes there to be a clause allowing there to be a reconsideration of the lease at 2 years.

**7. Motion to allow the public to speak**

All was said during item 5 so nothing else was raised.

**The meeting ended at 20:51**

**Next Meeting: Parish Council Meeting July 1<sup>st</sup>**