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**Minutes of Much Hoole Parish Council meeting held on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2026 at 7.30pm at The Venue at Hoole Village Memorial Hall, Liverpool Old Road, PR4 5QA.**

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**Present:** Cllrs K. Hayes (Chair), A. Taylor, E. Houghton, R. Lea, E. Jackson, P. Cocker, and Clerk Miss A. Evans

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Cllrs T. Hewitt and P. Fox

**2. Declaration of Interest and Dispensations**

Cllrs E. Houghton and A. Taylor declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda items 7 and 13d. Cllr R Lea declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda items 13d.

**3. Minutes of the previous Meeting**

**It was resolved** that the minutes of the MHPC meeting held on 9th March 2026 were approved as a true and accurate record, subject to the following amendment: Item 19, line 6 – “LHPC grant application” amended to “Little Hoole Primary School grant application”.

The amendment was proposed by Cllr E. Houghton, seconded by Cllr R. Lea, and agreed unanimously. The minutes, as amended, were then approved and signed by the Chair.

**4. Public Time**

The Chair opened Public Participation at 19:33.

Three members of the public were present.

- Mr Howard Davidson spoke in support of the Village Hall Men’s Shed grant application, highlighting benefits including improved wellbeing, reduced social isolation, and skills development. Additionally, the group would undertake projects benefiting the wider community.
- The Village Lengthsman reported:
  1. The bench at the end of Brook Lane (near the X2 bus stop) is unusable due to missing timbers.
  2. Safety concerns at the cycle track entrance, where children exit onto the road at speed. Suggestions included improved visibility or installation of a barrier. Cllr R. Lea advised that the current barrier is only anti-motorbike and another would need to be installed closer to the pavement.

Public time closed at 19:41.

**5. Correspondence from members of the public.**

No correspondence was received.

**6. Reports from other meetings and information on future events**

The Council noted two events involving MP Paul Foster. Cllr R. Lea will attend the Town and Parish Council Forum on 17 April 2026. A community coffee morning with the MP will be held on 24 April 2026 at The Venue, Much Hoole; details are on the parish council website.

**7. Village Hall**

The Council noted Cllr A. Taylor’s report on the Village Hall. He informed the Council that there are several upcoming events, including the Spring Fair, Hoole History Day and the Classic Car event. A regular swing band event is to start in April. Pickleball has started on the tennis courts. The management group is still actively dealing with the Padel court proposal and still looking for further funding for rebuilding the bowling pavilion. All regular activities are well attended.

## 8. Off Road Cycle Track

Cllr R. Lea inspected the cycle track following reports of deliberate damage to fence rails, where a ramp had been created. The Council agreed the Clerk should contact the cycle track lengthsman, Chris Hewitt, to ask if the lime pile can be moved or spread using the track budget. Regarding safety concerns at the track entrance raised during public time, the Council agreed the Clerk should write to LCC to confirm the boundary and request installation of a safety barrier.

## 9. Finance

- a) **It was resolved** to sign off the Bank reconciliation for the month of March 2026, signed by Cllr E. Houghton and unanimously agreed.
- b) **It was resolved** to sign off the Bank reconciliation for the financial year 01.04.2025 – 31.03.2026, signed by Cllr E. Houghton and unanimously agreed.
- c) The Clerk presented the year-end Financial Statement. The Council reviewed the reserves position and noted the explanation provided. Council thanked the clerk for an excellent report.
- d) The Council reviewed 2025-26 year-end income and expenditure against the budget, including variances. The detailed report was presented by the Clerk, and explanations for variances were noted. No concerns were raised but Council thanked the clerk for an excellent report..
- e) **It was resolved** to approve the Fixed Asset Register dated 31/03/2026. Proposed by the Chair, seconded by Cllr E. Jackson and unanimously agreed.
- f) Council considered both the amended CIL reports for 2018-24 and 2024-25 and the new report for 2025-26. **It was resolved** to approve all versions for publication, proposed by Cllr E. Jackson, seconded by Cllr R. Lea and unanimously agreed.
- g) **It was resolved** to approve a transfer of £1,674 from the current account to the CIL account to align the CIL balance with the reported reserve. Proposed by Cllr E. Houghton, seconded by Cllr R. Lea and unanimously agreed.
- h) **It was resolved** to authorise reclaimable VAT of up to £2,080 on the Liverpool Old Road bus shelter project (additional to the previously approved budget of £10,400). Proposed by Cllr E. Houghton, seconded by the Chair and unanimously agreed.
- i) **It was resolved** to approve payment of the Information Commissioner’s Office Data Protection Fee (£52) for Tier 1 registration for the parish council. Proposed by the Chair, seconded by Cllr A. Taylor and unanimously agreed.
- j) **It was resolved** to authorise the following payments, proposed by Cllr E. Houghton, seconded by Cllr R. Lea and unanimously agreed:

No	Date	Payee	Amount	Description
1)	31/03/2026	Amy Evans (Clerk)	£460.42	Clerk’s March salary
2)	17/03/2026	Amy Evans (Clerk)	£5.00	PAYG SIM reimbursement
3)	31/03/2026	Amy Evans (Clerk)	£27.82	Mileage reimbursement
4)	31/03/2026	Harry Jackson	£64.00	Lengthsman March invoice
5)	16/03/2026	Photocast Products	£24.13	Plaques – invoice shortfall

## 10. Governance and Policy

- a) It was resolved to approve the schedule of regular payments and Direct Debits (amounts subject to variation as invoiced), as follows:
  - Easy Websites – £64.68 per month
  - Bank fees – £7.00 per quarter
  - LALC subscription – as invoiced

- Burial ground maintenance grant – £500 per annum  
Proposed by the Chair, seconded by Cllr A. Taylor, and resolved unanimously.
- b) **It was resolved** to formally rename the Data Protection Policy to “Privacy Notice and Data Protection Policy”. Proposed by Cllr R. Lea, seconded by Cllr E. Jackson; unanimously agreed.

### 11. Staffing – Locum Clerk Pay

**It was resolved** to approve the pay scale (SCP21) for the locum clerk covering the current clerk’s maternity leave and that this will be subject to the 2026–27 pay award. Proposed by Cllr E. Jackson, seconded by Cllr E. Houghton and unanimously agreed.

### 12. Donation of Unclaimed FOI Fee

**It was resolved** to donate the £10 unclaimed FOI fee to Cancer Research UK. Proposed by the Chair, seconded by Cllr A. Taylor and unanimously agreed.

### 13. Grants

- The Council considered the excellent Clerk’s grant report for April 2026 and noted the recommendations.
- The Council considered a grant application from Little Hoole County Primary School PTA for £320 towards inflatable hire for a summer fair. While similar requests had been supported previously, it was resolved that such fundraising-related applications will not be supported in future and this application be refused. Proposed by Cllr R. Lea, seconded by Cllr E. Houghton, and agreed unanimously.
- The Council considered the grant application from Little Hoole and Friends Ground Force, which sought funding for a range of improvements to the school grounds. **It was resolved** to award a grant of £2,500 specifically towards the biodiversity elements of the application, namely the Wildflower & Sensory Area Rebuild and the Woodland/Forest School development. Proposed by Cllr R. Lea, seconded by Cllr E. Houghton, and agreed unanimously.
- Cllrs Taylor, Houghton and Lea withdrew from the meeting whilst the grant application of £1000 towards the cost of providing a Mens Shed at Hoole Village Memorial Hall was discussed and voted on. The Chair proposed and Cllr E. Jackson seconded the proposal to grant the money and this was approved.

### 14. Footpaths & Gardens

- The Council received an update from Cllr P. Cocker:
  - FP30: It was reported that modifications had been raised by a parishioner. Advice had been provided in a personal capacity, not in an official Council role.
  - FP11 (Puddle Duck Cottage): The Council noted correspondence with LCC Highways. It was reported that information had been issued to the landowner and that a Section 147 application is required to initiate the provision of a kissing gate at the road end. Cllr A. Taylor agreed to contact the landowner to follow up.
  - Footpath inspections: Cllr P. Cocker reported that footpaths 28, 30, 2 and 4 had been inspected during the month and were generally in good condition. It was noted that FP28 has a loose tread on a stile.
  - Regarding the public bench enquiry brought to Council’s attention during public time: It was agreed to attempt to report the damage via the Love Clean Streets reporting system before seeking further clarification from LCC.
- The Clerk reported that routine maintenance and cleaning of the children’s playground has been completed, with equipment remaining safe, regularly inspected, and operational. Repainting is planned for spring 2026, subject to weather, with quotations being obtained by SRBC. The update was noted.

## **15. Local Government Reorganisation - statutory consultation**

It was reported by Cllr R. Lea that he had made no submission to the consultation. The Council noted that no representation had been made.

## **16. Much Hoole Business Directory of Services & Suppliers**

Cllr R. Lea informed the council that no further progress had been made yet with the design work.

## **17. Fallen Soldiers Plaques**

The Chair presented the fallen soldiers' plaques to council, reporting that a number of addresses have been confirmed, but that the full list of correct addresses is still being collated. A vote of thanks to Cllr K Hayes was proposed by Cllr E. Houghton, seconded by Cllr A. Taylor, and agreed unanimously, expressing appreciation for the hard work and efforts undertaken.

## **18. Replacement Bus Shelter**

The Council received an update regarding the installation of the replacement bus shelter on Liverpool Old Road. It was reported that the project is at the stage of applying for a traffic management permit. Cllr P. Cocker offered to assist in identifying the required mapping and reviewing the proximity of nearby properties to support communication with residents if required.

## **19. Planning Applications**

The Council noted the following planning applications and resolved to make no comment: 07/2026/00205/DIS, 07/2026/00157/REM, 07/2026/00183/FUL, 07/2026/00168/NOT, 07/2026/00146/NOT. Regarding application 07/2026/00168/NOT (telecommunications mast), the Council noted a comment from Cllr P. Cocker that the proposed location appeared poorly sited. There was insufficient time for further discussion.

## **20. Items for next agenda**

- Cycle track entrance safety – update from LCC on boundary and barrier request
- Brook Lane bench – outcome of Love Clean Streets report / next steps
- Footpath FP11 (Puddle Duck Cottage) – Section 147 application and landowner update
- Playground repainting
- Replacement bus shelter – project progress update
- Fallen soldiers plaques – confirmation of remaining addresses
- Much Hoole Business Directory – progress update

### **Annual May meeting**

- Election of Chair and Vice Chair
- Review and adoption of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations (2026–27)
- Insurance Renewal
- Review of banking signatories
- Review and re-adoption of Council policies (including adoption of updated Code of Conduct and new Reserves Policy)
- Approval of Clerk handover arrangements (passwords/logins to locum clerk)

## **21. Date of next meeting**

The Council unanimously agreed the date of the Annual May Meeting as 7.30pm on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2026 at 'The Venue', Liverpool Old Road, Much Hoole. The meeting closed at 21:00.