

Minutes of the Dersingham Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 27th April 2026 at 6.30pm in The Garden Room, Dersingham Village Centre.

Present: 16 Members of the Public (12 Parish Councillors and 4 Parishioners)
Karen Orgill, Business Manager (BM) and Geraldine Scanlon, Assistant Business Manager (ABM).

Guest Speaker – Alex Coombs

Apologies: Cllrs Valerie Brundle and Dennis Wright.

Chairman C Shepherd chaired the meeting.

1. To approve the Minutes of the Annual Parish meeting held on 22nd April 2025

(a) To approve the minutes

It was resolved for the minutes to be signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record without amendment.

(b) To consider matters arising from the minutes

Cllr C Shepherd said at the last Annual Parish Meeting (APM) a parishioner had asked if the footpath between the Coach & Horses and the Village Centre could be resurfaced, the work has been scheduled but there has been no confirmed date for the work to begin.

2. Chairmans report

The Chairman presented the following report

Dersingham Parish Council Chairman's Annual Report 2026

As Chairman of the Parish Council, I am pleased to present my annual report, highlighting the achievements and developments that have taken place over the past year. As a Parish Council we have remained committed to engaging with our community, ensuring that the voices of our residents are heard and their concerns addressed.

As a reminder we provide a variety of services to the village, producing and circulating Village Voice to every household, providing dog waste bins, streetlights away from the main roads, grass cutting of land within our control, maintaining over 100 trees, 4 public noticeboards and various litter bins, seats and benches. We own and maintain the recreation ground which includes the childrens play area and skatepark, several informal open areas on the Mountbatten Estate, the War Memorial Gardens and The Warren. The meat of our work is achieved through our 5 committees - environment, finance and administration, planning, communications and staffing. All apart from Staffing are open to the public. Our full complement of councillors is 18 but we currently have 16.

The Parish Council has over 2.4 million pounds worth of assets, the main two are firstly the village centre which, under a lease, is looked after for us by the

Dersingham Village Centre Association, a registered charity. And secondly the Queen Elizabeth 2nd Jubilee Hall, rented by the Dersingham Social Club, which under new management is now a vibrant and popular facility in the village. We also lease the Sports Ground in Manor Road from the Sandringham Estate which in turn is leased by the latest village charity the Dersingham Sports Ground Association. They maintain the land for football, cricket and tennis, all of which have active clubs and this last year we have partnered with them to carry out a major refurbishment of the pavilion.

As councillors our work is varied throughout the year, from regularly scrutinising our accounts to ensure that parishioner's money is well managed to commenting on planning applications within the village and producing Village Voice. Despite rising prices we were able to keep the precept at last year's level, due to careful financial management and we have not had to reduce the level of services.

We have three members of staff - our Business Manager, Karen Orgill who has overall responsibility to keep us on the straight and narrow, our Responsible Finance Officer Joanne MacCallum who looks after finances and our Assistant Business Manager, Geraldine Scanlon who supports the BMs work and has a specific role for Village Voice including obtaining new advertisers and coordinating our team of volunteers who deliver the magazine to everyone in the village. I would like to give my sincere thanks to our editor, Jo Jones who after 6 years of dedication and hard work has decided to retire and to all those who give up their time to deliver the magazine, whatever the weather.

Over the last 12 months we have quietly achieved the following – commented to the Borough Council on 29 planning applications and given small donations to the following – the Village School towards a replacement audio system, NARS, Baby Basics, East Anglian Air Ambulance and Tapping House. We also provide grants to St Nicholas Church to assist with the costs of grass cutting and the Sports Ground Association to assist with the maintenance of the pitch and running costs of the pavilion and also to the Heacham Car Scheme. We have replaced 5 steel lamp columns in Woodside Avenue and Woodside Close which were rusting and becoming unsafe, had the Village sign near the junction of Lynn Road and Heath Road refurbished and repainted, replaced an area of bumpy paving under the lime tree at the war memorial gardens with gravel and improved the drainage gullies, provided seating within the bus shelters in Chapel and Manor Roads, and at the bus stop in Hunstanton Road near the junction with Woodside Close, provided a new bus shelter with seating in Mountbatten Road outside St Cecelia's, and replaced the 2 bus shelters in Hunstanton Road near the Recreation Ground and opposite Thaxters. These shelters now have seats and the benches that were outside the old shelters have been retained. For the new seating and bus shelters we obtained a generous 80% grant from the County Council. Finally, we have replaced 2 dog waste bins.

As we move forward, we have set two ambitious goals for the coming year, firstly the production of a neighbourhood plan which will set out policies on how we want to see the village develop and to be protected as a village surrounded by beautiful countryside. Secondly with grant aid to complete the refurbishment of the sports pavilion so that the football, tennis and cricket clubs can continue to grow and to have a facility of which they are proud.

I would like to thank all my fellow councillors for their help, support and hard work, both practical and moral over the last year. I would also like to thank our two Ward Councillors, Judy, and Tony for their support and also our County Councillor, Stuart Dark, who has decided to stand down but who has kept us up to date on wider county matters, supported our work and been generous with his county grant. Most importantly I would like, on behalf of us all, to give a huge thanks to our 3 hard-working members of staff who quietly, efficiently, and calmly beaver away in the background and without them we certainly would not be able to function or achieve as much as we do.

Coral Shepherd, Chairman

3. Questions/comments and previous matters raised by electors that they would like the Council to take forward.

There were no questions or comments from the parishioners.

4. Keynote Speaker – Alex Coombs, Chairman of The Dersingham United Charities (DUC)

Alex gave the following report to parishioners:

She explained the history of the United Charities endowments ranging from the initial 6s 8d from John Kydd in 1607 to current donations received and how the Dersingham Enclosure Act of 1779 provided three parcels of common land – Sandringham Road Allotments, Station Road Allotments and Recreation Ground.

The charity is run by Trustees, the maximum of which is 9. and there are two meetings held per year.

Alex advised parishioners of the locations of the eleven Charity Holdings which DUC maintain; they cover approximately 100 acres.

DUC have been able to give donations to local charities such as Dersingham Day Centre, a contribution to the primary school for a replacement PA system along with a donation towards the school garden. DUC also give donations to individuals that have been referred to them, one was given to a local child to assist with the expenses towards a school trip to Cambodia and another to three school children to help with Christmas presents.

There are three registered commons: The Open Common, Closed (Shut Up) Common and Fen Common. Fen Common gave parishioners the right to collect firewood, pea sticks and gorse for animal bedding, but it is thought these rights diminished after the war. Parishioners must now obtain permission from DUC to collect such items from the commons. The Open and Closed Common have wildlife status while the Fen Common is a Site of

Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and has RAMSAR status. All three commons are mostly maintained by volunteers.
The yearly Income and Expenditure was discussed.
Cllr C Shepherd asked why the Closed Common was also known as the Shut Up Common. Alex said this was because originally the Common was fenced to ensure cattle, sheep etc could not leave the area.

Date, time, and place of next Annual Parish Meeting. – to be confirmed

With no further business the meeting closed at 6.59pm.

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