

## Minutes of Hopton Castle Annual Parish Meeting 11<sup>th</sup> May 2026 held at Bedstone & Hopton Castle Village Hall 7.00pm

Present: John Williams (JW - Chair), Duncan Price (DP – Clerk/Finance), Jane Price, Neville Rollason, Isobel and Robert Date, Jan and Gareth Jones, Charles and Ann Jackson, Jonathan and Elaine Dean, Charlie and Kevin Bellamy, Sue Williams, Chris Gadd, Jack Chapman and David Miller.

1) **Apologies**

Peter and Jenny Marquis, Steve and Meadie Waterhouse, Yvonne Williams, Katie Rollason.

2) **Minutes:**

The minutes of the meeting of 12<sup>th</sup> January 2026 were agreed.

3) **Matters arising:**

a) Stream retaining wall – DP reported that, he had been back in touch with the Highways Agency and they had once again committed to doing the repairs in the current year. They are going to come back with a firm date. Sam Walmsley, the new LibDem councillor, has got involved and been very helpful and will continue to apply pressure. Watch this space (but don't hold your breath). **DP to follow up.**

b) Defibrillator training – it was agreed that another session should be held in the coming year as some people hadn't been trained for a while and others were new to the village. **DP to speak to RD about arranging a date and organising a training session.**

JC and DM queried the process for using the defib, asking how someone having a heart attack, or their partner, would be able to go to the phone box to get the defib. It was suggested that there be a list of people close to the phone box who would be willing to be called and asked to deliver the defib to the patient. This was agreed and RD agreed to canvass volunteers and form a rota. **RD to follow up.**

c) Defibrillator rota – The rota is available on the website and RD confirmed it was working appropriately, but re-iterated that the light in the phone box was still out of order. DP suggested to the meeting that anyone using an electrician for local work might ask them to look at the box and change the bulb or advise what needs to be done. **RD to follow up.**

d) Potholes – there had been some repair works carried out but new holes were always appearing. Everyone was asked to report potholes to the council.

e) Electricity Supply – JW reported that nothing had progressed since the last meeting.

4) **Chair's Report**

JW made an oral report which effectively stated very little had happened in the parish over the past year other than things already discussed. It was reiterated that it was important to maintain a Parish Meeting so the village could control the size of the precept.

5) **Election of Chair**

Having indicated he was prepared to stand, NR nominated JW as Chair and was seconded by JD. There were no other nominees, so JW was elected Chair.

6) **Election of vice-Chair**

PG indicated he was not willing to continue. Having indicated he was prepared to stand, JW nominated Neville Rollason as vice-Chair and this was seconded by ID. There were no other nominees, so JNR was elected Chair.

7) **Finance Report for the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026**

DP presented the accounts for the 12 months, noting that there had only been 2 payments totalling £534 (defib training and maintenance) and 1 receipt from Bedstone parish for their 50% share of the defib costs. The deficit for the year was therefore £267.00 and this left a balance of £2,614.67 in the bank including £1,155.00 (70%) for the cost of replacing the defibrillator.

8) **Budget for 2026/27**

DP presented the budget for the year, confirming that no precept had been applied for, so no income was expected (other than contribution to defibrillator costs). Total costs were expected to be £310 (net of Bedstone contribution) and this would lead to a reduction in available funds to £2,160, comprising the defibrillator replacement fund of £1,320 (80% of the replacement cost) and £840 of general funds.

9) **Annual Governance and Accountability Report (AGAR) – 2025/26**

DP presented the AGAR forms and explained that these had to be completed annually and submitted to a firm of auditors. There are 3 sections: annual exemption form, which means we don't need an audit because of our size; internal audit to ensure we are complying with rules and standards – this had once again been completed by Peter Marquis; and the return of our financial accounts and assurance we had applied appropriate financial procedures.

The AGAR forms were approved and signed by JW as Chair. DP would make the returns.

10) **Castle Trust matters of interest.**

Peter Marquis was not present, so DP gave an update on his behalf;

- a) Pendragon is an organisation which assist charities to maintain castles and other ancient monuments. Some discussions had been held in respect of assistance with:
  - i Setting up and maintaining the HCPT website
  - ii Maintenance of the grounds and help with the upkeep of the castle
  - iii Potentially replacing the decaying wooden steps with new stone steps
- b) There was to be a Hog Roast held at the castle sometime in August (date to be confirmed) which would include a raffle and entertainment
- c) Peter asked for any interesting photographs of the castle for the website. Charlie Bellamy agreed to speak to Peter about what she might be able to provide, given her expertise in abstract photography
- d) JW agreed to let his sheep graze on the castle grounds to keep the grass down

11) **Date of future meetings**


Meetings for 2026/27 will provisionally take place on:

- a) Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2026
- b) Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2027
- c) Monday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2027 (Annual Meeting)

12) **Any other business:**

There was no other business.

The meeting concluded at 7.30pm

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Williams', written over a dotted line.

Signed.....12<sup>th</sup> May 2026

John Williams