DRAFT

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE ACTON FIELD TRUST HELD AT 7pm ON THURSDAY 23rd July 2026.

IN THE SMALL COMMITTEE ROOM, ACTON VILLAGE HALL

Present: Chair: Christine Johnson, Treasurer: Nick Antill, Secretary: Jenny Antill, Julie Black, Barry Caradine, John Gibbens.

1. **Welcome** by the Chairman
2. **The minutes** of the meeting of Acton Field Trust held on Tuesday February 2026 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman
3. **Apologies for absence**: None
4. **Declarations of interest**: None received

ADJOURNMENT for Public Forum. No members of the public were present.

5. Field Maintenance etc

(i)(a) Julie Black (JB) had sought advice from various people including Adrian Walters, former Warden of Sudbury Common Lands Charity, and it had become obvious that a five year cutting schedule as previously discussed would not work. Based on Adrian Walters' advice, JB had drawn up a three section, three year cutting schedule:

	Section A	**Section B**	**Section C**
Year 1	*(February cut was missed)* October Cut	October Cut only	No cutting *(winter sanctuary)*
Year 2	October Cut only	No cutting *(winter sanctuary)*	Late February Cut October Cut
Year 3	No cutting *(winter sanctuary)*	Late February Cut October Cut	October Cut only
As for Year 1	Late February Cut October Cut	October Cut only	No cutting *(winter sanctuary)*

- The mid to late February should be a higher cut - 8-10 cms - to ensure any overwintering reptile habitats are avoided.
- October cut to be 5cm
- Cutting should be done from one side to the other to allow lizards and mammals to escape to the boundary hedges and sanctuary zone
- Cuttings to be raked up to create low linear habitat banks or brash piles along the edges, ideally along the margin of the current sanctuary zone.

This plan was approved unanimously with the proviso that depending upon weather and seasonal growth some flexibility may be required. Agreed that CreativeScapes be employed to carry out the work and the Chairman to settle a three year contract with them based on an hourly rate with an agreed maximum number of hours.

It was noted that bramble growth did not appear to be a problem and it was agreed that no action be taken re brambles this year apart from cutting back any trailing growth; reconsider next year.

JB was thanked for her work.

(i)(b) As no requests or complaints had been received from neighbouring householders it was agreed not to cut an access strip at the southern edge of the field but to include the area in the three year cutting cycle.

(i)(c) A request to be made to the Parish Council to ensure that the access paths are not made wider when they are cut.

(ii) Agreed that a wildlife sighting board be erected near the field entrance so that the public can record anything of note which they have seen. This facility would be in accordance with the educational aims of the charity. JB to investigate further and obtain pricings

(iii) Agreed that Leigh Martin be employed to strengthen the ownership detail board. JB was authorised to deal directly with him.

(iv) There was concern that several very old oak trees, some of which did not belong to AFT but were overhanging Acton PRoW 9 might be dangerous. Chairman to arrange for Suffolk Tree Services to inspect and advise. There was concern that if the neighbouring landowner were to be approached the trees might be felled. Agreed that if the cost was no more than £2,000 AFT should carry out any safety work.

6. Treasurer's report.

Year to date income and expenditure shows a net surplus of £735 leaving a cash balance at the bank of £6,336. We shall receive a dividend of £1,100 on 28 August. As of the day of the meeting (23 July) our investment portfolio had a market value of £112,391.

Our costs included a legal item of £100. This was a penalty payment made to HMRC on account of our not having received, and therefore not having responded to, its request that we file the accounts for the period to end March 2025 with them. We have subsequently set up a web-based account with HMRC, have paid the penalty and have filed the relevant accounts. Their calculation shows that there is no tax payable. HMRC has requested that we again file our accounts with them for the period to end March 2026. This will be done concurrently with the filing the annual return with the Charity Commission, which must be after end July. There will be a cost of some £30 for the approved software to let us file the accounts with HMRC. It is hoped that once it is apparent that our ongoing annual income is closer to £5,000 than £100,000, HMRC will not require filings in future years.

7. Future agenda items None noted.

8. Date of Next Meeting End of October

The meeting closed at 7.40pm