

# ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF ELECTORS

Acton Village Hall  
Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2026

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held in Acton Village Hall at 7pm on  
Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2025

**Present:** 16 residents (including six Parish Councillors), District Cllr Malvisi, County Cllr Faircloth-Mutton and the Clerk

## 1. Welcome

The Acton Parish Council Chairman, Cllr Round, welcomed those present to the meeting.

## 2. Apologies

No apologies were received.

## 3. Minutes

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2025 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

## 4. Chairman's Annual Report

The Chairman reported on the work of Acton Parish Council throughout the past year. Report attached.

The Chair also welcomed any suggestions to be added to action plan & project list.

## 5. County Councillor's Report

County Cllr Philip Faircloth-Mutton thanked the Parish Council, the village community groups and the residents of Acton for their hard work over the past year.

County Cllr Faircloth-Mutton reported on some highlights of the year and the coming months for both Acton and the County:

Wider County Developments: Three Unitary Councils have been confirmed. Acton will be in West Suffolk with Bury St Edmunds. Elections will be held in May 2027. The new Unitary system will take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2028.

Acton Matters:

High Street & Waldingfield Rd has been resurfaced.

Parking restrictions High Street & Barrow Hill will go ahead. Thanks to Acton Parish Council for working with together with County on this project.

Thanks to Cllr Antill for his work with getting a designated PROW at the airfield.

Queensway: Thanks to residents and Acton Parish Council for raising awareness of footways. These have now been trimmed back.

The tree at Daniels Close has now been felled, as it was restricting natural light for residents. County Cllr Faircloth-Mutton thanked APC for working with him on this.

County Cllr Faircloth-Mutton's term as County Councillor has lasted 5 years. Whatever the result of May election, he gave thanks to Acton and all groups within it for the ongoing support, especially social circles that address loneliness. He wished everyone well and expressed what a pleasure it has been to serve everyone.

Resident Comment: They had had a conversation with a County Council contractor, who commented on the lack or organisation in SCC Highways.

Resident Comment: Highways don't fix potholes in roads in the same village at the same time and asked if it will be better service under the new Unitary system.

County Cllr Response: Hopefully a change in contractor will lead to better solutions and more accountability.

Resident Comment: Still gravel/chippings from the newly resurfaced High Street and Waldingfield Road at kerbs and on paths. Potholes in Queensway have led to people driving on the path.

County Councillor Response: A sweep has been requested.

Cllr Round: The road resurfacing wasn't done properly and the pavements weren't swept. County Council said they don't sweep pavements. People are filling buckets with chippings.

County Cllr Faircloth-Mutton: A site visit will be requested. Hedges on Queensway were cut last year but legal action needs to be taken.

Cllr Round mentioned drain near shop blocked, which is stopping water from water leak being drained. A resident commented that the drain at the bottom of Barrow Hill is also a long-term blocked drain in need of investigation.

County Cllr Faircloth-Mutton: To request all drains from Barrow Hill to Vicarage Lane get site visits.

Resident Comment: They have been reporting the drain by the shop for years but nothing has been sorted. Need to properly investigate what is stopping the water from draining away.

## **6. District Councillor's Report**

No report was delivered but District Cllr Malvisi welcomed questions from residents.

Resident Comment: Is Babergh responsible for sweeping any footpaths?

District Cllr Mavlisi: There used to be a cleaning grant but it was cut due to budget.

Cllr Round: Babergh are good at being reactive once you contact Public Realm about a specific area.

Resident Comment: Will Unitary Councils save money and resolve issues?

District Cllr Malvisi: In first instance, it will save money. There should be seamless connection between departments.

County Cllr Faircloth-Mutton: Highways & Public Realm will come together, which should address a lot of issues.

Cllr Round: Where are we with the Local Plan?

District Cllr Malvisi: There was a Town & Parish meeting in March – public consultation will be in June & July. There has been an update on funding to help with local plans.

## **7. Reports from Local Groups and Organisations**

- APFVH (Village Hall): Chair's Written report attached.
- Acton Playgroup: Written report attached.
- Acton Good Neighbour Scheme: Written report appended but also presented by Teresa Farley, who gave a special thank you to everyone who has provided funding.
- Acton Field Trust: Written report attached.
- Acton Puzzle Library and Book Swap: Organiser Katie McSweeney reported these have been running since the 2020 lockdown and are very well used. Donations of £1500 have been raised so far, which all go to local charities. Once the donations box gets to £50, a national or local charity is chosen. The donation to the village hall enabled the purchase of badminton equipment, which now generates funds for APFVH. The book swap books eventually get donated to church book sales.
- Acton Amblers: Organiser Katie McSweeney reported the group started in August 2021 with 143 walks to date. There are now annual traditional walks such as Bluebell Walk, Lavenham Lights and Boxing Day Bimble.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 7.55 pm

### **Abbreviations Used:**

Cllr: Councillor

Signed:..... Date .....

## Parish Council report to the Annual Parish Meeting 15<sup>th</sup> April 2026

As Chairman of the Parish Council, I am pleased to present the Council's annual report. In addition to the regular work of the Council, I have highlighted the significant achievements and developments that have taken place over the past year.

Throughout the year, the Parish Council has remained committed to engaging with our community, ensuring that the voices of our residents are heard and, where within our ability, their concerns are addressed.

To help with communications and resident involvement, the use of local social media has been increased and a new Parish noticeboard has been installed at Queensway Green.

In addition to the general running of the Parish Council, guided by our Action Plan, the Parish Council has taken on several projects and tasks to improve village facilities.

### **Projects carried out:**

**Hard surface in front of the waste bins:** The Parish Council installed a hard surface in front of the waste bins adjacent to the lower car park end of the village hall. The area in front of the bins had become muddy and slippery. Funded from Parish Community Infrastructure funds (CIL).

**Two additional dog bins installed:** one bin for the Waldingfield Road end of Vicarage Lane and a second bin at the top end of the village hall car park. The cost of purchasing the bins was covered by Neighbourhood CIL funds. Weekly emptying costs are covered by Parish Council precept funds. A note that Babergh are again increasing the fee for the emptying service of parish bins by inflation busting amounts.

**Acton Summer Fair:** A grant from the Parish Council supported the annual Summer Fair organised by Acton Play Group. The grant of (£350) supported free children's activities.

**Village hall external repairs and decorating:** A grant of £5,610 was awarded to the village hall to cover essential external repairs and decorating of the building, which is now 20 years old.

**Village Hall lighting upgrade:** The Parish Council topped up a Babergh District Council grant to fund replacing the building's fluorescent lighting to compliant energy saving LED lighting units, which include the introduction of sensor switching throughout the building. The project resulted in a more reliable and compliant system that will reduce energy usage.

**Suffolk CC vegetation cutting of Parish public rights of ways:** The Parish Council was able arrange for SCC to include PRow 16 (Waldingfield Rd to the Airfield) into its twice-yearly cutting programme. Reminder to adjacent landowners to ensure the width of routes is maintained, as you are responsible for clearing side & overhead vegetation and hedge growth.

**Extensive tree safety work along Jennens Way:** Funded by Parish Council reserves - £2,415.00

**Parish Councillor vacancy filled:** In July, Merian Davis was co-opted onto the Parish Council.

**Agreement with Suffolk County Council to install parking restrictions:** Following many years of concerns being raised by residents about the poor junction visibility, Highways are to implement parking restrictions on the High Street at the Barrow Hill junction.

**Acton Community Emergency Plan:** Led by Cllr John Gibbens, Acton has worked with the Suffolk County Council Emergency Planning Officer to adopt a Community Emergency Plan.

The aim of the Community Emergency Plan is to enable the village to provide effective immediate support to those involved in an emergency, including anyone who has been injured or displaced, and to assist the Emergency Services.

**Annual Christmas Tree Community Event:** Led by Cllr Katie McSweeney and our Parish Clerk (Abbie Lee), another successful, well-attended community event was organised in December.

**Acton Parish Noticeboard:** A new Acton Parish noticeboard, providing improved visibility and accessibility, has been installed at Queensway next to the bus stop. Funded from Neighbourhood CIL funds.

**Tree felled at Daniels Close:** No one likes the felling of a tree, but a massive hornbeam tree at Daniels close was causing loss of daylight in residential dwellings. The tree was the responsibility of Suffolk County Council, who the Parish Council eventually persuaded that the tree should be removed. Thanks to our County Councillor for making use of his Locality Budget, tree surgeons were set to work.

**New heating control panel for village hall plant room:** A grant from Babergh District Council, topped up by Parish Council Community Infrastructure funds will allow the upgrade of the 20-year-old control panel. The project will improve reliability and provide much needed remote and flexible access to the heating control system. The aim is to improve reliability and reduce energy use.

**Upgrade of the surface along PRow 2** leading from the High Street to the village hall and Church has been agreed and approved. We tried without success to have Suffolk County Council take on the task, but this didn't work out. The Parish Council has agreed to make use of Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure funds to cover the cost of resurfacing the route. This has been a large project to organise and work should start June/July this summer. Parish Council will be responsible for future maintenance of the new surface.

#### **Future Projects:**

**New and replacement play equipment at Lime Tree Green Play Area:** Hopefully making use of Babergh District Council grants and Parish Council reserves, a plan is being worked on to make improvements to the play area.

**Request to Suffolk County Council to implement a 20mph Zone in Acton:** The Parish Council are researching and seeking views regarding a request to Highways for the implementation of a 20mph zone, with one of three suggested options to consider.

Residents' suggestions for tasks that could be added to the Acton Action Plan 2026-27 are being sought. Attached is a copy of the current Action Plan with notes to show progress.

Lastly, thank you to my fellow councillors for volunteering to serve our community and thank you to our Parish Clerk for doing an excellent job.

Graham Round  
Chairman Acton Parish Council

## Tasks for the Action Plan (2024-25)

Approved at the Parish Council Meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2024. Note that the 2023 Action Plan will remain a live document.

It is proposed that the below tasks should form the 2024-25 Action Plan. Each task that is added to the plan will be researched and costed before it comes forward for full council approval.

1. Consider installing 2 streetlights between the end of Old Post Office Row and Coblers Way. Increased usage of this pedestrian route following the new estate development of Tamage Road. Done
2. Purchase additional lights for Christmas tree. Done
3. Councillors to regularly review the council website to consider adding additional helpful information. Ongoing
4. Work with SCC Highways and our County Councillor to address excessive vehicle speed and rat running through the village, including speeding during the hours of dark. Acton's through route has narrow stretches of roadside pavement and sections with no pavement. The narrow pavements without green verges place pedestrians (especially Children) too close to the moving traffic Suggestions from residents:
  - Village-wide 20 mph zone
  - Part or entire through route (Melford Rd, High Street & Waldingfield Rd) to be considered a 20 mph zone.
  - Two crossing points at High Street/Jennens Way and High Street/Lambert Drive link.
  - Pinch Points and or crossing points on village through route.
  - Countdown markers/signs approaching 30 mph gateway along Melford Rd.
  - Other traffic calming measures.
  - New pole and Large SID (smiley face version) for Sudbury Rd.
5. Ask SCC Highways to improve pedestrian safety at the corner of Waldingfield and Ten Tree Road. Concern is raised for those walking to and from Gt Waldingfield. As a minimum, introduce pedestrians-in-road signage.
6. Plant daffodil bulbs at 8 new village gateways. Done
7. Add Speed Watch page to parish council website, with social media link. Explanation of the purpose of SW and more volunteers needed. Done
8. Request Babergh DC to plant Wildflower on Coblers Way bank.
9. Spring bulbs to be planted on areas of grass (Cannon Pugh and Babergh Close)
10. Continue with process of letters to remind homeowners to keep hedges clear from pavements. Ongoing

11. Request that Babergh repurpose the unused land at Queensway, plant trees or rewild it. Possible children's pump track site. **Ongoing - BDC slow**
12. Consider constructing hard/semi-hard footpath surface onto LTG by the school and link the pathway to the nearby dog bin. Existing route becomes muddy and slippery in winter. **Done**
13. Continue to request that SCC Highways improve junction safety at Barrow Hill/High Street junction. **Parking restrictions underway**
14. Ask school to encourage those picking up children from school to turn off their engines whilst stationary.
15. Boules Pitch sign installed either side of the boules pitch.
16. Install replacement dog waste pick-up signs to encourage dog owners to clean up. Existing signs are missing or faded. **Done**
17. Install dog waste bin at High Street, end of Acton Field.
18. Install dog waste bin at Waldingfield Rd end of Vicarage Lane. **Done**
19. Ask village shop proprietor to install a litter bin close to shop.
20. Infill gaps in Jennens Way hedge and reduce height of existing hedge for safety reasons.
21. Financial/grant support for Village Hall maintenance and projects. **Ongoing**

### **Suggested New Tasks for Action Plan 26-27**

- New equipment for Lime Tree Green Play area with all-inclusive swings, team swing and more exciting agility area.
- Continue with Charity Manager financial support for Village Hall.
- Refurbish gravel surface at Jennens Way and general tidy. Reduce hedge height.
- Work with SCC Rights of Way to level out walking surface of PROW 6.

### Acton Playing Field and Village Hall (APFVH): 2025 – 2026

A new committee was formed 12 months ago. The Village Hall was in a critical financial state and on the verge of closure. The Village Hall is an essential community asset and was in urgent need of essential remedial work to enable the doors to be kept open.

The Village Hall Manager has worked tirelessly to obtain financial support from community grants which has enabled us to undertake essential maintenance and projects. We have also been supported by Acton Parish Council.

Grants have been received from:

Acton Parish Council: All grant money spent on essential Health and Safety issues.

- Fire Test and equipment
- Extinguishers
- room stat
- Heating – new Boiler required within 2 weeks of change of management
- external painting and gutters
- Powerflush
- Water testing
- electrical testing
- Copper cylinder
- Pressure Vessel Test
- Doors and electrical remedials
- LED Lighting
- Funding also being used for the ongoing heating project.

Babergh District Council:

- Update lighting throughout hall to LED. Old fluorescent tubes no longer replaceable. Money also spent on updating outdated emergency lighting.
- Toilet upgrade

BDC Well people, Healthy places:

Provision of Yoga and Powerhoop sessions for residents. This was an extremely well supported initiative and has resulted in hire of the hall for further bookings.

Note: A detailed financial report will be available at the APFVH Annual Meeting  
Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April: Acton Village Hall

Village Hall user groups:

User groups have supported fund raising events and have donated items to help with improvements.

- Urn
- Microwave
- Kick stools
- Waste bin
- Fly trap

It takes a lot of money to keep the doors open. We have made excellent progress in 12 months. Currently we are making good progress with steady bookings, but we need to build a contingency fund to cushion us from any unexpected outlays and to keep the hall maintained to high safety standards.

Acton Village Hall is now registered as an Emergency Rest Centre for use by the local area in the event of any major emergency.

Carol Dyer

CHAIR APFVH

## Acton Playgroup Report 2025/2026

We have had an amazing year so far!

May 2025 saw us achieve another Outstanding Ofsted during which the inspector commented on our activities within the local community and the importance of this for children's learning, something we are incredibly proud of and keen to continue and grow.

*"Children enjoy an extensive range of experiences. For example, they take train trips to the local museum, go on buses to visit the elderly at the day centre and use the local shop to buy ingredients for their cooking activities. These experiences help to shape children's understanding of the community in which they live."*

We currently have 28 Acton families attending our setting and a further 19 families from the local area who chose Acton Playgroup mainly because of its community and village feel, which is wonderful.

We have been very busy out in the community this year with our regular seasonal walks, where the children learn about our village, environment and community – often stopping for a 'chat' with local residents as they go!

We have paid many visits to the village shop where children have chosen and purchased ingredients for their cooking lessons. We even had a very special visit from local author Chris for our World Book Day Celebrations!

Our Nativity at Acton All Saints Church was, as always, a magical experience – thank you to Rev. Faith for having us, it really is such a unique and special occasion.

We have been working hard in our fundraising efforts by hosting the Halloween Disco, Festive Fayre and various raffles and competitions.

Our biggest fundraiser was, of course, the brilliant Acton Village Summer Fete that raised over £1700 and was attended by so many village residents, school and playgroup families. The weather held out and much fun was had by all. We were extremely grateful to the Parish Council for their generous donation of £350 which enabled us to offer a high-class entertainer for many children to enjoy, free of charge. This brought additional families along to the fete who may not have otherwise attended and ensured that we could 'bridge the gap' for children and families who are not in the financial position to have these experiences usually. We must also thank the village residents for giving so generously to our Tombola – a tradition which never fails to cause great excitement!

We have many special events for the year ahead, including more visits to local care homes and day centres, the 2026 Summer Fete and Festive Fayre, sports sessions, cookery sessions, special visitors and more!

Acton Playgroup is a special setting that continues to go from strength to strength in nurturing the young minds that will help to shape the future of our village and as ever, we thank our community for its ongoing support in helping us achieve this.



## The Acton Good Neighbour Scheme

13.04.2026

The Acton Good Neighbour Scheme has been formally operating now for over 7 years. Over this time the GNS has:

- Received **over 360 requests** for support from Acton residents;
- Provided **over 1,520 free lunches** of soup or sandwich through our Community Lunch Club (established in Nov 22).

The AGNS Chairperson and the rest of the committee would like to thank the Parish Council for their continued support for the Acton Good Neighbour Scheme and Lunch Club and the generous financial donation this year towards The Acton Good Neighbour Scheme.

### Summary of activity:

The ANGS has provided a range of support for residents of Acton over the last year, with the most common requests for support include:

- Providing transport to medical appointments both locally and further afield;
- Providing transport to vet appointments;

We currently have 19 volunteers supporting the Acton Good Neighbour Scheme, including lunch club.

	No. calls received	No. calls unable to support*
Jan 2026 - April 2026	19	
Jan 2025 -Dec 2025	30	0
Jan 2024 - Dec 2024	68	1
Jan 2019 - Dec 2023	251	14

The number of calls for support to the AGNS have reduced over the last 2 years despite active promotion through a leaflet drop. We will investigate this and continue with our promotion.

### Lunch Club:

Lunch club, established in Nov 2022, has grown from strength to strength over the years. In 2025 we served over 130 more lunches than we did in 2024, bringing the total in 2025 to 585.



**ACTON  
GOOD  
NEIGHBOUR  
SCHEME**

2025 was the 3rd year we've hosted our Community Christmas Lunch, serving 36 traditional Christmas dinners. A huge thanks goes to all the local businesses who sponsored the lunch and the volunteers who gave their time to help on the day.

Lunch club is an extension of the GNS which focuses on:

- Providing a safe, friendly space for residents of Acton to socialise and meet others;
- To reduce social isolation and loneliness;
- To provide free food in a non judgemental and inclusive environment.

	Free Lunches served	Total number of sessions
Jan 26 - April 26	168	7
Jan 25 - Dec 25	585	24*
Jan 24 - Dec 24	452	24*
Jan 23 - Dec 23	303	24*
Nov 22 - Dec 22	15	3

\* included a full Christmas dinner with the trimmings in December.

In December 2025 we held our 3rd Christmas lunch. We served 36 full Christmas dinners to the community. We have received very positive feedback from all those that attended and we are hopeful to be able to offer a Christmas dinner again in 2026. Acton Primary school choir also attended the Christmas lunch to sing carols to all that attended. A huge thank you must be given to our team of volunteers who helped prepare, cook and serve the dinners and the local business who sponsored the lunch this year.

Felicity's Driver Training,  
Acton Sand and Soil,  
Salisbury Virtual Assistance,  
Edge Physio,  
JDM Driving,  
X-tra Safe Driving School,  
Sarah Piano Teacher,  
VSP Hairdressing,  
ACW windows,  
BJM IG Privacy Ltd.





### Achievements and Funding:

- The Acton Good Neighbour Scheme relies heavily on grant funding and donations to ensure we can continue to provide our services free of charge to residents in Acton.
- We also do a small amount of fundraising through a raffle at the Christmas Lunch.
- Funding receiving this year has included:
  - £630 received from local business to sponsor the Christmas Lunch (it was agreed surplus money could be put towards lunch club costs through out the year)
  - £250 received from Cllr Malvisi as part of the locality budget. This needed to be spent by the end of March and could not be used for the purchase of food. (It went towards the costs of our Public Liability and Employers insurance).
  - £300 received from Acton Parish Council - to be used towards the Good Neighbour Scheme and Lunch club.
- Our biggest expenses are our annual insurance and the purchase of food products for the lunch club.
- The Acton Good Neighbour Scheme Lunch Club has been a huge success and is reaching many residents of Acton, providing company and building friendships.
- Successful recruitment of new volunteers to enable a rota to be established for Lunch Club Support.

### Future Activities:

- Fundraising and applying for grant funding is our current priority. The funding we secured at the beginning of the year is spent or allocated so we are keen to secure further funding for this year and into next.
- Look to increase the number of phone calls to the GNS.

**ACTON FIELD TRUST** (Regd. Charity No. 1208011)

**Report given to Acton's Annual Parish Meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2026**

The Acton Field Trust committee has met three times in the past year and in addition there has been regular informal communication between members. Acton Parish Council is the sole trustee and a verbal report is made to the council at each of its meetings.

The aim of the Trust is to maintain an accessible open space for the benefit of wildlife and the wellbeing of Acton residents and visitors. Unfortunately but inevitably there have been problems with dog walkers who do not pick up their animals' waste or, what is worse, pick it up in a plastic bag and leave the plastic bag and contents behind.

Two seats have been installed and also a fixed camera point at the north end. In the next few days a notice board will be erected so that whenever work is being carried out the public can be made kept informed of what is happening and there will also be information about anything particular to be seen at various times of the year.

As the field is owned by a charity we are very fortunate that amongst the committee members we have someone who understands the requirements of the Charity Commissioners and ensures that we abide by all the rules and operate within our means. We are also extremely fortunate to have one member who has close connections with Suffolk Wildlife Trust and other local wildlife organisations which has enabled us to obtain invaluable advice on how to manage the land. Next month a survey of plants and flowers will be carried out. This coming autumn a rotational cutting programme will begin in order to encourage the development of self-seeding wild flowers. The overall aim is to leave the field as a scrub-grassland habitat and for it to be as undisturbed as possible. We hope that this will encourage ground nesting birds such as skylarks.

Last autumn a large number of self-sown saplings were removed from the site to prevent the area from turning into a wood. Selected saplings have been left to enable them to grow into fully mature trees. One of the problems we have encountered is that some neighbouring householders have dumped garden waste on to the field which has introduced non-native species. It is difficult to eradicate these once they take hold.

The charity's accounts will be presented to the May meeting of the parish council.

Report prepared by Christine Johnson, Chairman, Acton Field Trust.