

PARISH MEETING REPORTS 1st MARCH 2026 AT 4.00PM AT HUXLEY VILLAGE HALL

In attendance: 15

The Chairman, Cllr Sackett, welcomed everyone to the Parish Meeting and explained that the speaker from the Canal and River Trusts had unfortunately cancelled at short notice. Therefore the meeting was opened to anyone wishing to report on their groups activities for the year:-

Huxley Village Hall – presented by Steve Hyden, Chair of Trustees

It was reported that Huxley Village Hall currently had 8 Trustees, all volunteers. They manage the Hall's affairs and raise funds for annual upkeep and improvements. They receive no external funding so they must raise all income through:

- 1) hire of hall - they try to keep this hourly rate to a minimum to encourage maximum use:
 - a) regular users: PC, WI, Historical Society, Monthly Sunday morning Church coffee morning and others including U3A and dancing class.
 - b) Individuals for parties (80th to baby showers) wedding receptions etc.
- 2) Trustees organising events to encourage residents to meet and socialise: -
 - a) Film nights – 6 per year Nov to May
 - b) Xmas Quiz Night – Dec
 - c) Burns Night – Jan organised by Happy Days Committee.

Funds maintain the hall e.g. utilities (usually easy although water provider is problematic), fire checks etc. Also, improvements over the years include new chairs, heaters, outside lighting, loft insulation (following rodents eating wires) etc.

Thanks to all trustees for all of their hard work and all the other who have helped throughout the year. Meetings are kept to a minimum, and decisions are mainly made via email/test throughout the year, however half the trustees are also on other bodies such as the PC and Happy Days. We would welcome anyone who would like to join us in helping in any way so please do not hesitate to contact Steve Hyden.

Happy Days

Happy Days are a team of people who bring together the local community of Hargrave and Huxley and surrounding neighbourhood by organising fun events that can be enjoyed by all the family. Our aim is also to raise money for local charities and St Peter's Church, Hargrave.

Last year we were able to donate a total of £3400 to North West Air Ambulance, For the Love of Lydia, Chester SANDS and St Peter's Church. Our year runs from September to August and at present we are raising money for Save the Family, North West Air Ambulance, Cheshire Agricultural Chaplaincy and St Peter's Church, Hargrave. Our events this year have included a Beacon Bonfire, Christmas Wreath Making Event, a Christmas Carols and Canape Evening, and a Burns Night. Over the last couple of years we have also worked in conjunction with the Parish Council to help with their Litter Picking mornings.

Huxley Primary School – prepared by Rachel Gourley and presented by Laura Rhodes

Huxley CE Primary School continues to grow and flourish, moving from just 4 pupils in 2021 to being oversubscribed with 61 pupils today, with waiting lists in several year groups. This remarkable progress reflects the strength of our provision and the growing confidence families have in our school.

With the support of our Trust, we have successfully added a new classroom, enabling us to welcome more pupils and strengthen the long-term sustainability of the school.

A significant feature of our school community is that 82% of our pupils are flexi-schooled, attending school Tuesday–Thursday and receiving home education on the remaining days. Flexi-schooling is a legal form of full-time education delivered across two settings—home and school—and is not the same as part-time attendance.

Our Headteacher plays an active role in promoting awareness and understanding of flexi-schooling at a national level. She contributes to numerous external meetings with the most recent taking place at Westminster, talking to colleagues about EHE and flexi-schooling as part of an alternative provision. She is a member of the Flexi-schooling Leadership Council, supporting wider recognition of the model and its benefits for children who may otherwise not access any formal education.

Our pupils continue to achieve strongly—academically, socially, and emotionally—and the school is proud of the well-rounded progress they make.

Looking ahead, interest in joining the school remains exceptionally high. We have received three times as many applications as places available for Reception 2026, alongside substantial in-year waiting lists. This growing demand highlights the positive reputation of Huxley CE Primary and indicates that the school’s future sustainability is highly favourable.

Hargrave Church — presented by Laura Rhodes, Vicar

Church and Community Activities

It has been another full and positive year at St Peter’s Church. Alongside our weekly Sunday services, we continue to hold a monthly Café Church in the hall, offering an informal space for conversation over coffee and croissants. Our second year of our “Christmas Choir” brought together twenty members of the community to sing at our carol service, which was a real highlight of the season. We have also launched a new Grounds and Environment Group, meeting on the first Saturday of each month for practical work followed by a bacon sandwich. We would love to grow this group and, in time, extend projects beyond the churchyard.

Work with Families

Messy Church meets monthly on Sunday afternoons, welcoming families for Bible stories, crafts, songs and food. The playgroup has successfully relocated from Huxley School to Hargrave Church Hall and has flourished, with new members forming supportive friendships. We have also celebrated one beautiful wedding, several baptisms, and welcomed the Bishop for the confirmation of three young people. We continue to work with Huxley School, doing a weekly collective worship and collaborating on a termly school worship in church.

Pastoral Support

We have conducted a significant number of funerals this year and remain committed to supporting families in times of grief. For our Lent Group last year, we had a weekly discussion over lunch on the subject of Death and Dying. Considering the topic, there was a lot of laughter. Our theme this year is the film, ‘The Way’.

Charitable Giving

Our charitable giving has included the Christian Aid Big Breakfast, our Advent “Jar of Grace” for UNICEF, and support for Save the Family at Harvest and Christmas, alongside other causes during the year.

Finances

Financially, we face increasing pressure due to higher diocesan contributions, organ repairs, and the replacement of cast iron guttering costing around £10,000. I had never appreciated the importance of guttering, until you see our nearly 400 year old walls eroding. We are deeply grateful to all who support us, including The Moulson Trust and Happy Days.

Plans for the Year Ahead

Looking ahead, we are planning a summer sponsored run and walk to raise funds for the church building, as well as beginning preparations for our 400th anniversary in 2027. We also hope to launch a more affordable summer holiday club for local families and a monthly community lunch for the whole community, but particularly for those who find it difficult to get out and about. We remain committed to working closely with local groups and Huxley School and to serving the whole community in the year ahead.

Historical Group – Bob Burgess, Committee Member

It was reported that the group was founded in 1982 and has published a History of Hargrave and Huxley and a pictorial history book. They meet on the 2nd Monday of the month at 7.30pm from September to May and share their meetings between the Hargrave and Huxley Halls. They have a very broad range of interesting topics including:-

9th March – Chester Clocks

13th April – John Bradshaw and the Witch Trials

11th May – Chester Trams and Restoring the last remaining tram (currently located at Hooton Hangers)

The new season's programme will run from 'Reading the Landscape', to the Art of the Victorian Con and at least 8 other varied topics which are advertised monthly in Down our Way.

The Historical Group are always delighted to receive membership enquiries, and non-members are welcome to sample a meeting by paying £3 on the door.

The H&H Group are affiliated to other local history groups, which gives our members access to their programmes too. For example, online talks and visits to the Lewis Carroll Centre on 6th May and the Hooton Hanger Aircraft collection in July.

Cheshire Local History Association's History Day, held again in Tarporley October 10th and the (free) Wirral History Fair on 21st March, are other activities in which our local group is involved. Come and join us.

Reported upon two books that have been published by the Historical Group.

Within the group there is an active group, they share their activities between the two hall, Hargrave and Huxley.

They have regular speakers coming to speak to the Historical Group.

Next years programme begins in September and runs to May and covers lots of different speakers for example reading the landscape and the Victorian's con.

The association has an annual history day and will be held in September in Tarporley.

Sir Thomas Moulston Trust written by Neil Robinson (Chairman of Trustees)

The following report represents the activities of the Trust for the year to the 1 March 2026. A more formal report (i.e. that submitted to the Charity Commission will appear in Down Our Way for the year end 31 December 2025) in due course.

1. Trustees

Mike Roscoe stood down from his role as Nominative Trustee from the Councilors of the Hargrave and Huxley Parish Council ("the Council") and in his place the Council nominated Richard Jones who was appointed as a Trustee in June 2025. The Moulson Trustees would like to formally record their thanks and appreciation to Mike Roscoe for his dedication and service in performing his duties whilst being a Nominative Trustee. The Moulson Trustees would also like to formally record their welcome to Richard Jones.

The Moulson Trustees were also delighted to retain the services of Mike Roscoe who accepted the nomination for the vacant position of one of the Co-opted Trustee and so the Trust has the continuity and benefit of Mike's knowledge for a further period.

2. Income Distributions

In September 2025 the Trust made its annual income distribution and was again able to distribute £15,000.00, meaning that the total distributions collectively for the last 4 years starting September 2021 have amounted to £75,000.00. This equates to £25,000.00 to the Parochial Church Council, £25,000.00 towards the stipend of the Church and £25,000.00 towards the promotion of education of persons under the age of 25 years who are resident in the area of benefit, namely is the "Ancient Parish of Tarvin" plus the village of Huxley. Monies were also added to a sinking fund for the upkeep of the Church Hall and the Old School House.

3. The Old School House

In December the Trust said goodbye to Alex & Pete, the long standing tenants of the Old School House, Alex had been a tenant for over 10 years. However, the Trustees are hopeful of finding another tenant as reliable as Alex & Pete who wish to make the Old School House their home.

The Trustees have recently completed phase one of a refurbishment plan of the Old School House. This has included, full internal painting, new carpets throughout and new kitchen flooring, as well as new kitchen tops, a new oven, hob and extractor fan and external general tidy up. In the Spring it is proposed that all external wood work will be repainted.

The property is currently on the market for let with EC Lettings in Tattenhall and the Trustees hope to complete a new tenancy agreement very shortly.

4. The Church Hall

During the year the Trustees have organised and the Trust has paid for a number of running repairs to the external lighting, the men's and woman's toilets, the roof and the floor to the hall itself.

5. Title to the Moulson Land

Title to the Moulson Land is now registered at HM Land Registry in the name of the Official Custodian for Charities and has been registered with freehold title absolute, the best title available in England & Wales. The Title Number is CH727811 and is accessible to view to the general public.

6. 400 year Celebrations

The following notice appeared in Down Our Way

"The year 2027 will be the 400th anniversary of the building of our St Peter's Church thanks to the generosity of Sir Thomas Moulson. For most of the first half of its existence it also doubled up as the School for our local community – this was housed in a mezzanine in the rear half of the church and now long demolished. Both Hargrave Parochial Church Council and The Moulson Trust will be discussing in the coming weeks how our present community is going to mark this auspicious occasion in 2027. It is the intention of both the PCC and The Moulson

Trust that a group will be formed for anyone interested in planning the event. You could be an existing member of one of our community clubs or societies, a present or past pupil at Huxley School, a young person who has benefited from a Moulson Trust grant or just an individual, young or old, who would delight in being a part of this group. In a future Down Our Way there will be further details but, meanwhile, please do contact Laura, our Vicar, or Neil Robinson, Chair of The Moulson Trust, to say you would like to be a member of the planning team”

The Trustees are very keen to acknowledge the 400 year anniversary and this will be discussed further at the next Trustee meeting on the 19 March, but all thoughts/contributions as to what this could look like are very welcome.

Given the historical connections the Trust has made initial contact with the following for some form of non-financial contribution to the celebrations:

- i) Grocers Charity
- ii) The Grosvenor Estate
- iii) The Bolesworth Estate
- iv) Harvard University

Bowling Club – Mike Rosco

It was reported that they are always looking for new members, there is currently three teams, Tuesday afternoon league and one on a Monday night, it is a friendly club that plays bowls.

Hargrave and Huxley Parish Council

Main Points of Note in 2025-26

1. The PC has nine Parish Councillor seats these have been filled for the whole of the year.
2. The Parishes of Hargrave, Huxley and Hatton has approximately 200 households and 410 electors.
3. The Parish Council was consulted on 10 planning applications;
 - Six were given a Neutral ‘No objection’ response (i.e. no material impact as per the NP or general planning considerations)
 - Three were Objected to (i.e. adverse impact as per the NP),
 - One application was Supported
 - One issue within the area was reported to Planning Enforcement
4. The PC continues to utilise its website to provide access to PC papers and distribute information of potential public interest and in 2026 has transferred over to a new domain name HargraveHuxleyParishCouncil.gov.uk which is WCAG 2.2 accessible and GDPR compliant.
5. The Parish Council continues to use it’s Speed Indicator Device on Church Lane outside the Primary School and Huxley Lane and sharing the data with Cheshire West and Chester Council and the Police Force.
6. The Parish Council purchased daffodils which were planted in Huxley, Hargrave and Foulk Stapleford.
7. The Parish Council purchased a Noticeboard to replace the broken one in Hargrave.
8. The Parish Council in conjunction with Happy Days undertook two litter picking events throughout the year, the Parish Council thanks everyone who took part in these events.
9. The Parish Council introduced a Grant Giving Policy this year and hopes to be able to support local community groups with this fund.
10. The Parish Council continues to work with the Public Rights of Way Officer from Cheshire West and Chester Council to improve the public rights of way through Foulk Stapleford, Hargrave and Huxley ensuring any damaged stiles or blocked footpaths are reported, they have created a circulate loop in the Parish of Huxley with kissing gates on Huxley FP6, FP5, FP19, FP4 and FP11.

11. This years Parish Meeting was held in March, at the meeting there were reports received from Happy Days, Moulson Trust, The Bowling Club, Huxley Village Hall, and St Peter's Church Hall on their activities for the year.
12. The Parish Council has met with Cheshire West and Chester Highways Department about their ongoing concerns about the condition of the rural roads, blocked gullies, flooding, weeds along roadside and overgrown hedges and these are raised at regular quarterly meetings that the Parish Council have with the Highways Department.

Financial Performance

The Parish Council's Budget for 2025-26 was set at £11,088 with a Precept for the year of £6,360 which was 4.7% on previous years.

For 2025-26, the PC operating costs and projects have come in over budget due to the purchase of a noticeboard for Hargrave, however funds from the Community Infrastructure Levy money contributed towards this purchase.

The Precept for 2026-27 has been set at £6,500. This equates to a band D charge of £23.70, a decrease of £0.19 on last year's £23.89.

Council Attendance 2025-26

Hargrave and Huxley Parish Council held 6 Parish Council meetings between April 2025 and March 2026.

On average 8 Parish Councillors attended each council meeting.

CW&C Councillor Mike Jones did not attend any of the Parish Council meeting due to the date of the meeting conflicting with his day off.

The PCSO attended no Parish Council meetings.

Over the year Public Participation at the Parish Council meetings has ranged between 0 and 18 members of the public depending on the subject matter on the agenda. The Parish Council always welcomes members of the public to attend the Parish Council meeting and there is a maximum of 20 minutes set aside on the agenda for Public Participation at each meeting.

The Chairman wishes to pass on her thanks to all of the Parish Councillors who give their time and energy free of charge to assist in Parish Council matters.

Meeting closed 16:39