



Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2022 at 7pm, at the village hall.

Present – Cllr Harrison (Chairman), Cllr Bell (Vice Chair).

Rachel Popplewell – Clerk

Haydn Short – Strawsons representative.

3 Members of the Public.

1. Welcome from the Chairman of the Parish Council.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, adding that this year the Annual Meeting can now be held face to face, as most of the restrictions due to Covid have been lifted.

2. Notes of the Annual Parish meeting held on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021 to be approved minutes.

It was **Resolved** to approve the notes as minutes and a true record of the meeting, agreed and signed by the Chairman.

3. To receive the Annual Chairman's Report.

**Witham St Hughs Parish Council Chairman's Annual Parish Report 2022 (Apr 2021 - Mar 22)**

2021-2022 has seen the impact on all of us of COVID19, we have emerged, with some hesitation from the worst pandemic in 100 years, life now has begun to return to the new normal. We have all been offered vaccinations, 3 and some now 4, and for the vulnerable amongst us it is still a great concern. It has been a difficult year for everyone, following COVID19 we have the concerns of a war in Ukraine and the high rise in energy and living costs, it is times like this that we look to our families, friends, and neighbours.

Witham I feel is a village where people look out for each other, as was clear to see with our Covid19 Support group, set up early into the pandemic by Cllr Snape, reassuring to see that asks of help with shopping etc were abundant from the start and continued throughout

We are extremely grateful to and thank the NHS and key workers for all their hard work in such difficult times.

Our Parish Council meetings returned to a form of normality in June 2021, when legislation dictated that we had to resume face to face meetings, (prior to this we were allowed to meet on Zoom) we have had some residents join us at our meetings but look forward to seeing more in the coming

months. I thank all councillors for their continued attendance which ensured that we held a meeting each month throughout the year.

There have been several changes in Council membership, Cllrs Stuart Branagan, Al Fenney and Roger Linnell resigning, goodbye to you all, and thank you for your commitment and service.

I would like to welcome Cllrs Spencer Hill, C Danny Bell, and Emma Houghton all who joined us during the pandemic– not an easy task to join a busy Council at normal times, but during a Pandemic when all meetings were held initially via Zoom – having to hit the ground running so to speak should be commended.

We have been kept busy during the year with planning applications, where we have reviewed 24.

We saw the request for the siting of a 18m 5G mast on Warren Lane, and although we are not against 5G masts (the village really does need improved coverage) we objected against the location as we felt there are more appropriate sites in the village. NKDC objected too, but due to a clerical error on their part didn't lodge the refusal in time which resulted in the company attempting to put in place the infrastructure to house the mast. Once we were aware of the work commencing, we quickly put in several phone calls, and enlisted the help of County Councillor Marianne Overton to revoke LCCs work instructions and stop the installation. An exercise we had to repeat a few weeks later. We hope that the company will speak to us first about possible sites before going ahead again.

The applications associated with Phase 3 planning has played a big part of our year. Avant Homes and Countryside both putting in outline planning permissions the first two developers who will attribute to the overall Phase 3 outline planning for 1100 homes and 150 care/retirement units.

We have had virtual meetings with both developers and are working closely with planning at NKDC to ensure that lessons learnt from Phase 1 around open space ownership, boundary ownership and landscaping are not replicated in Phase 3 when plans are submitted.

It is good to see the arterial roads for Phase 3 now looking to be in place and, as I observed recently, a site office for the first developer. Finally, after many years of planning we see the village expansion starting to take place. I am sure that we will be kept very busy over the coming months/years with more planning applications to comment on.

9 of this year's applications related to St Modwen Park, where with easy access to the motorway network we see more units being constructed and occupied bringing jobs to the local communities.

In June 2021 we took the decision to move to a new website, free of charge, available from the County Council, specifically designed for parish councils for all our Parish Information, this however has not been without its issues. Our Councils website, along with a handful of others remain undiscoverable with a Google search. Despite numerous requests for this to be rectified the issue is still ongoing. Cllr Mrs Overton has been asked to assist with its resolution. The site can be found at <https://witham-st-hughs.parish.lincolnshire.gov.uk/>

Following comments from residents about the periphery hoggin paths, we recently appointed a contract to carry out repair work on the paths under our responsibility. This included cutting in drainage channels to allow the runoff of water which pooled with heavy rain. The schedule of work was on areas which were observed to need attention following 2 walks during the rain with different contractors. We will continue to monitor.

We recently saw Mr Adrian Sale from Strawson retiring. Adrian has been a constant all the time that I have been on the Council and worked with us throughout phases 1 and 2 and the planning for 3. We wish him all the best for his retirement, he will be missed, but we now welcome Haydn Short who with 7 years under his belt at Strawson's is well versed on the nuances of our village.

Our thanks go to:

- County Councillor Marianne Overton and District Councillor Peter Overton, for their attendance and support to the Parish throughout the year. Thanks to being at the end of the phone when we need you.
- To Marianne for the bench on Cuckoo Walk dedicated to the Witham COVID19 volunteers' group.
- To Witham St Hughs Events Committee continuing to organise events for the village Last year's Beer and Music Festival, planned in such a short space of time brought the whole community together, it was wonderful to see so many families having a great time coming out of lockdown. Bonfire night was another success. The events committee provided the Christmas Tree once again, and recently donated for new tables.
- Councillor Houghton for organising the Remembrance Service, residents attended in person this time, whilst it was again streamed on Facebook live as in the previous year. Thanks to those that made the service possible.
- To residents who assist us with asks for help when needed, making things that little bit easier for us.
- The village organisations who do so much to help the village and the community, giving up their time freely
- To other members of the team, Vicky our Litter Picker and Bianca, our Village Hall caretaker.
- A lot of the work of the Parish Council goes on due to the commitment of my fellow councillors and I would like to thank them for all their work over the past year.

We have busy times ahead as we continue to plan our new "super park"; the adoption of open spaces for Phase 2; the continued review on the planning applications for Phase 3; the upcoming release of 106 funds towards an extension to the village hall, all along with the day-to-day Council business and upkeep of our current areas of responsibility. Lots of work for a council with vacancies so we have an ask.

Your Council Needs You! Parish councils and the help and support that councillors provide for their communities, only survive if sufficient people put their names forward for election or co-option to a parish council. We have two vacancies for co-option and encourage and welcome residents to have a chat with us to gain more information on what it takes to be a Councillor.

Finally, one more thanks go to our Clerk Rachel. Rachel joined us at the start of the pandemic and living outside of the village Rachel had to quickly understand the nuances of Witham St Hughs – a complex village of varying house builders, developers, management companies and personalities. At the same time as getting to grips with all of this we set Rachel the task of obtaining a Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) which recently she passed with flying colours, first time the Council has had a clerk with a recognised qualification. She now guides us with accurate and timely information to facilitate the council's decision making. Thanks Rachel.

Cllr Karen Harrison

23<sup>rd</sup> May 2022

4. Annual Reports from District & County Councillors  
See attached report from Cllr Peter Overton & Cllr Appleby.
5. Open Forum

Discussions then followed between Strawson's representative and the Scout leader as well as with Witham St Hughs FC.

Meeting closed 8.20pm.

Signed .....

Date .....

Print .....