



Minutes of Witham St Hughs Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 19th February 2025 at 7pm at the village hall.

<https://witham-st-hughs.parish.lincolnshire.gov.uk/>

Present Cllr Danny Bell – Chair, Cllr Mark Gascoigne, Cllr Charlie Strickland & Cllr Karen Harrison (Vice Chair).

Rachel Popplewell – Clerk

1 member of the public

District Councillor Peter Overton made comment that the District Council have proposed a 3.75% increase on the budget equating to a £5 increase on a Band D property.

County Councillor Marianna Overton made comment regarding the Mayoral elections in May, and the changes in the hierarchy of local government once the mayor has been elected, along with an update on the solar farm proposals and the location & size of the batteries proposed for our area.

Questions were raised by the member of public regarding the increase in the precept and Earmarked reserves.

The Chair clarified why Earmarked reserves cannot be used to fund the day to day running of the council along with the hall hire tariff for the community groups.

Agenda Items

1. Welcome and Apologies.

Cllr Bell welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Cllr Cook; it was **Resolved** to accept the reason for absence and the apology. All agreed – show of hands.

2. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LOCALISM ACT 2011 AND OUTLINED IN THE COUNCILS CODE OF CONDUCT – being any pecuniary interest in agenda items not previously recorded on Members' Register of Interest and any written requests for dispensations.

Cllr Harrison agenda item 8

3. Health & Safety brief

The Clerk made comment that the bollards were now covered in vibrant tape to make them more visible. Thanks were passed on to Cllr Gascoigne.

4. Notes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 15th January 2025 to be approved as minutes.

It was **Resolved** to approve the notes as minutes – all agreed by a show of hands, signed by the Chair.

5. Clerks Update & Correspondence - to Resolve to approve any subsequent actions.

The Clerk made comment that the tree on Elder Close had been removed.

The Emergency Plan has been sent to Lincolnshire Resilience Forum, no response had been received.

The repairs to Co-op Park have been completed by Kompan.

The new play equipment has been installed at Cuckoo Park.

The block paving has been repaired on Cuckoo Walk.

The land earmarked for the Scouts has been transferred to the Parish Council from Strawson's, a lease is in the process of be raised.

The bus stops are being refurbished by Lincolnshire County Council, although one has been vandalised already. The parish council passed their thanks onto LCC. Councillors approved the purchase of a pot of the paint used, to use on the bus stops when needed.

The Clerk asked Councillors to set the date of the Annual Parish Meeting – 17th March 2025 at 7pm.

The Clerk mentioned VE day on the 8th May 2025, asked Councillors to consider holding an event to commemorate the day. It was **Resolved** to hold a Tea & Cake afternoon on Saturday 10th May 2025.

Councillors approved the residents request to remove a hedge and install fence around his property on New Swann Close/Cuckoo Walk.

6. Finance.

a. To Authorise the signing of orders for payment, list previously circulated.

It was **Resolved** to approve the list of payments – all agreed show of hands.

After discussions it was **Resolved** to remove Cllr Bell from all parish council signing mandates & bank accounts. All agreed – show of hands.

b. To receive the Bank Reconciliation as at 31.01.2025

The bank reconciliation as at the 31.01.2025 was presented to council, showing the accounts balanced – signed Cllr Strickland.

The Clerk was asked to split the Allotment Deposits, from the general allotment account.

The Clerk confirmed that they are classed as Earmarked funds for the External Auditor.

c. To approve & sign the Parish Council Highways Grass Cutting Agreement for 2025/2026.

It was **Resolved** to approve the agreement – all agreed show of hands.

d. To approve the costs to purchase replacement bins for the village.

After discussions it was **Resolved** to purchase 1 x new bin – all agreed, show of hands.

e. To sign the Direct Debit Mandate for HMRC payments.

It was **Resolved** to sign the Direct Debit mandate for HMRC payments. – all agreed, show of hands.

7. To consider taking on the maintenance of the hoggin path from Juniper Play Park to Buttercup Way & the grassed area from Buttercup Way – Poppy Road on behalf of North Kesteven District Council.

Planning ref – 10/1426/RESM.

The clerk made comment that, the Parish Council had been approached by the District Council regard the areas above; the District Council have S106 monies available to cover the costs which would be passed onto the parish council.

After discussions it was **Resolved** to approve the request from the District Council to maintain both areas.

All agreed – show of hands.

8. To review Village Hall opening hours & booking fees for the next financial year.

Cllr Harrison Declared an Interest in this agenda item, did not part take in the vote or discussions.

After discussions it was **Resolved** to increase the hall hire fees for the Community Groups to £13 per booking w.e.f. - 01.04.2025. All agreed – show of hands

After discussions it was **Resolved** to increase the field hire and changing room hire w.e.f. – 01.04.2025 to the following - all agreed, show of hands. All other hall hire fees to remain unchanged.

Changing rooms - £20

Football Pitch hire - £30

Field hire - £15

The only change to the opening hours – Bar Nights on a Friday must be finished by midnight, w.e.f – 01.03.2025.

It was **Resolved** to suspend Standing Order 3x to allow the meeting to continue beyond the 2 hours time limit. All agreed – show of hands.

9. To consider the Chairs' responsibilities for Witham St Hughs Parish Council.

After discussions it was **Resolved** that the Chair of the Parish Council would be expected to carry out the following duties for the parish council (list not exhaustive)

- Laying of the Wreath at the Remembrance Day service
- Attend Cluster meetings
- Attend Chair's training course
- Attend the Annual Parish Meeting
- Take the Out of Office when the Clerk is unavailable

10. To Resolve to approve a new role of Village Caretaker & Job Description.

After discussions it was **Resolved** to investigate appointing a contractor as the Village Caretaker on a regular basis, before advertising for a new member of staff, all agreed – show of hands.

11. To consider the proposed Allotment plot fees for 2026/2027, from the Allotment Committee.

After discussions it was **Resolved** to approve the following fees for 2026/2027 – all agreed, show of hands.

Half plot - £30pa

Full plot - £52pa

No changes to plot deposits or key deposits.

12. Planning

a. To note the response to the following planning application – 24/1106/RESM.

Cells 7A & 7B Witham St Hughs, Phase 3 East of Camp Road and North of Hannah Crescent.

Response submitted 21.01.2025

We cannot see where our concerns from October 2024 have been addressed.

Heavy standard trees still are showing adjacent parking spaces and driveways, which in time the roots are likely to cause issues

Proposed extra heavy duty fruit trees are showing alongside the green lanes. From experience over time the roots will cause issues to the paths, and fruit falling from the trees will cause issues for the mowing of the grass and present a slip hazard on the paths

Timber fencing does not denote ownership where adjacent to gardens and drives, please clarify who has ownership of all the knee-high rail fencing. The Parish Council will not adopt fencing in or around the Cell. Post and rail fencing adjacent green areas - ownership need to be defined,

Plot 55 still has an enclosed strip of land without access, who is responsible for this area?

Who will have responsibility for the Metal estate fencing long term.

Who will have responsibility for the pockets of green space and green lanes long term?

Email comments were collated and submitted under the Clerks delegated powers.

b. To consider the following planning application-

Amended plans submitted to address comments made by the Case Officer, Parish Council, LCC

Highways, Tree Officer & Operation Service manager

Cells 7A & 7B Witham St Hughs, Phase 3 East of Camp Road and North of Hannah Crescent.

Ref – 24/1106/RESM

After discussions it was **Resolved** to submit the following comments for the application, All agreed – show of hands.

We agree with the comments submitted by the Tree Officer, clarification regarding boundaries and open spaces is still required. The parish council will not adopt fencing.

13. To review the following policies –

- a. Subject Access Request Procedure
- b. Data Breach Policy
- c. Data Protection Policy
- d. Data Map
- e. Records Retention Policy
- f. To receive Security Compliance Checklist from Councillors.

After discussions it was **Resolved** to review the policies, amendment to the records retention policy - to now include WhatsApp messages – auto disappearing after 90 days. Checklists were received from all councillors. All agreed – show of hands.

14. Balance Ponds

- a. To Resolve to approve the quotes to produce the maintenance reports.

After discussions it was **Resolved** to approve the quote from Simply Aquatic of £200 + vat. All agreed – show of hands.

15. Phase 2 walk round update.

Cllr Harrison & the Clerk made comment that they had met with Strawson’s, on the whole Phase 2 was looking better with only a few jobs still outstanding to be completed – a few of the outstanding jobs listed below.

- Boundary clarification in several areas.
- Hedge cutting Green Lane.
- New replacement bins.
- Gates at the playpark
- Balance pond works

16. Parish Councillor Recruitment.

Comments were received, regarding recruiting new councillors – the parish council currently has 2 vacancies. It was **Resolved** to hold a cheese & wine recruitment evening, to explain the role and what it entails to try and fill the vacant seats.

Date & Time 26th March at 7 – 8.30pm.

- b. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING.

Parish Council Meeting Wednesday 19th March 2025 at 7pm

Meeting closed 10pm

Signed

Date

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