Minutes of Witham St Hughs Annual Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 20th May 2026 at 7.00pm at the village hall.

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

Present Cllr Karen Harrison – Chair, Cllr Mark Gascoigne, Cllr Charlie Strickland & Cllr Kerry Bowley-Webb.

Rachel Popplewell – Parish Clerk

1 member of the public

Agenda Items

1. To Elect a Chairman for Witham St Hughs Parish Council for the ensuing year 2026/2027

   Cllr Harrison asked for nominations for the Chair, for the year 2026/2027.

   One nomination was received for Cllr Harrison.

   Cllr Harrison was elected as Chairman for the ensuring year, all agreed show of hands.

2. To receive the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form from the Chairman for 2026/2027.

   Cllr Harrison signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form.

3. To Elect a Vice-Chairman of Witham St Hughs Parish Council and to receive the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form. For the ensuing year 2026/2027
   No nominations were received.

4. Public Forum – To resolve to suspend standing orders for a maximum of 10 minutes to allow members of public to make comment or ask questions.
   It was **Resolved** to suspend Standing Orders for 10 mins to allow comments from the public – All Agreed, show of hands.
   No Comments were received.

5. To Receive Apologies for Absence.
   None.

6. 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.

   None received.

The clerk reminded Councillors to ensure that their Register of Interests were kept updated should they have a change of circumstances.

7. Health & Safety brief.
The Clerk made comment that the entrance to the allotments was overgrown making visibility poor when entering/leaving the allotments onto the road. The Clerk to ask the open spaces contractor to strim the area. Action Clerk.

8. To Resolve to fill by Co-option Parish Councillor vacancy.
Following discussions the candidate decided not to apply for the vacancy.

9. Notes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 22nd April 2026 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.

10. Clerks Update & Correspondence, and to Resolve to approve any subsequent actions.
The Clerk made comment that Councillors had been and spoken to residents that live near to Sorrel Road balance pond, to make them aware that they cannot carry out any maintenance work in the pond, as it wasn't safe to do so. Fly tipping also wasn't permitted.
All the remedials from the EICR report had been completed.
All the forms and T&C were signed and agreed with the new bar providers for the hall. The first night being 15.05.2026 which was deemed a success.
The Clerk made comment that the Solar Panels feed in tariff was still to be implemented as the wrong MPAN number had been put on the certificate by the Solar Panel Company.

11. To Appoint members to the following committees and thereafter appoint the Chair of each Committee (SO 4.d.vi).
    a. Personnel Committee - After discussions it was **Resolved** to appoint Cllr Bowley-Webb & Cllr Strickland to the Personnel Committee, along with a HR Consultant. Cllr Bowley-Webb as Chair of the Committee. All Agreed – show of hands.
    b. Allotment Committee – After discussions it was **Resolved** to appoint Cllr Harrison, Cllr Gascoigne to the Allotment Committee, with Cllr Harrison as Chair of the Committee. All Agreed – show of hands.

12. To review the following policies.
After discussions it was **Resolved** to review the following policies – all agreed, show of hands.
    a. Standing Orders for the Council
    b. Financial Regulations for the Council and to **Resolve** to accept variable Direct Debits & online banking. (revised version Feb 2025).
    It was **Resolved** to accept variable direct debits & online Banking for Council & the use of a Credit Card, settled in full monthly by Direct Debit.
    c. Terms of Reference for the Personnel Committee.

13. To Resolve to agree Parish Council meeting dates for the year 2026/2027.
It was **Resolved** to approve the list of meeting dates and start times for the ensuing year. To be published on the website. Action Clerk.

14. To receive the Annual Internal Audit report for 2025/2026

    The Chair read out the internal audit report, no irregularities were highlighted.

    "The Parish Clerk & RFO should be acknowledged on providing excellent administration support and for keeping satisfactory financial records on behalf of the Parish Council."

    Thanks were passed onto the Clerk.

    Thanks were passed on to Steve Fletcher – Auditor, for conducting the audit.

15. To consider, approve & sign the Annual Governance Statements for 2025/2026

    The Annual Governance Statements were considered – it was **Resolved** to answer them all positively, signed by the Chair & Clerk.

16. To approve & sign the Accounting Statements 2025/2026.

    It was **Resolved** to approve the Accounting Statements as correct – All Agreed. Signed by the Chair & Clerk.

17. To note the dates of the Period for the Exercise of Public Rights.

    The Clerk made comment that the following dates would be used, as suggested by PKF Littlejohn, 3rd June 2026 – 14th July 2026.

18. To appoint an Internal Auditor for the Financial Year 2026/2027

    After discussions it was **Resolved** to appoint S Fletcher on a 1-year contract to carry out the Internal Audit for 2026/2027. All Agreed, show of hands.

19. To review the Asset Register in line with the Parish Council insurance policy schedule, and to approve the Annual Insurance Premium (Council are on a 3-year LTA)

    It was **Resolved** to approve the Annual Insurance Premium of £2542.49 and the Asset Register, with the addition of the container, solar panel and the contents of the container. – All agreed, show of hands.

20. 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.

       Councillors were reminded that under Internal Controls, the should arrange to meet with the Clerk to review the processes.

    b. To receive the Bank Reconciliation as at 30.04.2026

       The bank reconciliation as at 30.04.2026 was presented to the council, showing the accounts balanced, Signed by Cllr Strickland.

    c. To receive a list of regular payments.

       The Clerk presented the regular payments list to Council, after discussion it was **Resolved** to accept the list circulated. All agreed – show of hands.

    d. to approve the costs to install replacement litter bins in the parish.

       After discussions it was **Resolved** to approve the costs of £33 per bin, payable to NKDC. All agreed – show of hands.

    e. To approve the costs to cut the grass for the area of land designated for the Scouts.

       After discussions it was **Resolved** to approve the costs of £325 to cut the grass. All agreed – show of hands.

    f. To approve the costs for an additional CCTV camera to cover the container area.

       After discussions it was **Resolved** to approve the quote of £ 1060+VAT. Agreed on a majority vote.

g. <u>To approve the additional items requested for the caretakers.</u>
After discussions it was **Resolved** to approve a budget of £300 for the additional pieces of equipment/tools for the caretakers. All agreed – show of hands.

21. <u>Village hall extension update.</u>
The Clerk made comment that she had received a preliminary quote based on the plans to be submitted for the planning application, not a detailed specification of £890,000.00

22. It was **Resolved** to move into closed session to discuss the following.
Items of a confidential nature to be debated in the absence of the press & public under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

a. <u>Staffing.</u>
The appointment of a HR Consultant – *Deferred*
The Clerk asked the Council to consider an amendment to the Sickness & Absence Policy, to include Compassionate & Bereavement Leave.
After discussions it was **Resolved** to amend the wording of the policy – all agreed, show of hands.

23. <u>DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING.</u>

Tuesday 23rd June 2026 at 7.30pm.

Signed ……………………………………….

Dated ……………………………………….

Print ………………………………………..

Meeting Closed at 8.40pm