

## **WILLOUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held in the Village Hall, Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2025 @ 6.30pm.**

#### **PRESENT**

Cllr. Mr. D. Cowell (Chair), Cllr. Mr. G. Rowles Nicholson (Vice Chair), Cllr. Miss. K. Clarke, Cllr. Mrs. T. Given and Cllr. Mrs. K. Phillips.

Also present, Cllr. Mr. P. Howitt-Cowan, Cllr. Mr. C. Reeve, Cllr. T. Horsfield, and Ms. Hazel Fox (Clerk).

Prior to the meeting, the Chair welcomed Cllr. T. Horsfield from Hemswell Parish Council to the meeting and thanked her for her attendance.

#### **2509/01. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Apologies were received from Cllr. Ms. H. Goring and Cllr. Mrs. S. Rovezzano. The Council accepted the absence of Cllr. Mrs. S. Rovezzano and Cllr. Ms. H. Goring as valid and unavoidable.

#### **2509/02. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/DISPENSATIONS.**

Cllr. Mr. D. Cowell expressed an interest as his Wife is Chair of the Board of Governors of Willoughton School.

Cllr. Mr. G. Rowles Nicholson expressed an interest as lessee of the Playing Field. Cllr. Mr. D. Cowell and

Cllr. Mr. G. Rowles Nicholson expressed an interest in Willoughton Church and Churchyard.

#### **2509/03. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.**

No comments.

#### **2509/04. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 24<sup>th</sup> July 2025.**

**Resolution: Minutes approved and were signed by the chair.**

#### **2509/05. REPORT FROM CLLR. MR. P. HOWITT-COWAN.**

Cllr. Mr. P. Howitt-Cowan reported on the West Lindsey District Council (WLDC) Full Council meeting on Monday and the situation after the removal of the previous Leader, Cllr. Trevor Young and Deputy Leader Cllr. Lesley Rollings on 7<sup>th</sup> July. Cllr. Howitt-Cowan expressed disappointment in the removal of two hardworking members of the Council after members of their own Liberal Democrat group joined forces with the Conservatives and various Independent groups to force them from office. This has had implications for Cllr. Howitt-Cowan as he was removed as Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The new CEO, Paul Burkinshaw is due to arrive in post on 19<sup>th</sup> October. There are currently 125 defibrillator units in locations across West Lindsey, which have saved 8 lives. There are council tax and car park consultations running. The council has received £5million homes grants from the government. WLDC are inviting community grant applications from groups and encouraged the Parish Council and Church to apply. Local Government reorganisation/devolution was discussed. Parish Councils could join together and although this is voluntary at present it could become compulsory. The West Lindsey District Council Annual General Meeting will be held in Nettleham on 24<sup>th</sup> September at 10am and the conference will be held at Hemswell Court on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2026, with hopefully the Bishop of Lincoln in attendance. The Chair thanked Cllr. Howitt-Cowan for his report and noted the Parish Council was disappointed in his removal from key roles and thanked him for his service over the years.

Cllr. Mr. C. Reeve noted Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) had no current plans to change the format of Parish Councils. Councillors are volunteers and it was not desirable to increase their workload unnecessarily. The intention is to remain as is, however Parish Councils who are interested in doing so would be able to access funding which would be made available. Community consultations are ongoing regarding Local Government Reorganisation in Lincolnshire. Cllr. Reeve urged road issues to be reported via "fix my street" and noted issues with work which had not been up to standard. Information was given on help with projects such as installing highways signs and other small works. The Clerk enquired if LCC would be able to assist with bird foul cleaning in the Village Play Area. Cllr. Reeve will make enquiries and revert. Cllr. Reeve was thanked for the information given.

The Chair moved 2509/09 forward.

#### **2509/09. HIGHWAYS.**

##### **a. Damage to salt bin/dog waste bin/speed sign at entrance to Village on Vicarage Road.**

Cllr. Miss. K. Clarke had reported to the Clerk, a vehicle had been in collision with the items, and all had been

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demolished. The Clerk reported via “fix my street” and some debris has been removed. The Clerk is chasing reinstatement of the items and further clearing up. It was noted residents have discussed this on social media and suggestions of who is responsible. Cllr. C. Reeve reminded, the assets have a cost involved and those responsible should be reported if known and have not already come forward to report. **Action: Clerk.**

**b. Water corner of Gainsborough Road outside Caudle House.**

Currently awaiting further investigation works by Anglian Water. Cllr. T. Horsfield offered assistance, and the Clerk will forward details to Cllr. Horsfield. Thanks were given for this offer. **Action: Clerk.**

Concerns were also raised regarding lack of signage to warn motorists of horses at this junction and other areas in the village. Existing signs are worn and require replacement. The Clerk has emailed LCC Highways to enquire regarding availability and cost, and signs are also required to warn motorists of children near the school. A budget of £250 was agreed and Cllr. Mr. G. Rowles Nicholson offered to install. **Action: Clerk/Cllr. Mr. G. Rowles Nicholson.**

**c. Blocked grating between 3 and 7 Northfield Lane.**

The Clerk had reported this via “fix my street” on 21<sup>st</sup> July and no updates were available. The Clerk continues to chase. Cllr. Mr. G. Rowles Nicholson has also reported, and the drains remain blocked. **Action: Clerk.**

**d. Blocked drains Hollowgate Hill/Long Lane.**

This had been reported to the Clerk by Cllr. Mr. G. Rowles Nicholson. The Clerk had reported via “fix my street”. Updates had been received advising further investigation was required. The Clerk continues to chase. **Action: Clerk.**

**e. Speed indicator devices.**

The battery unit on Hollowgate Hill has now been replaced by a solar powered unit and is in operation. A tool bit has been purchased to allow the three units to be turned around periodically. Cllr. Miss. K. Clarke offered assistance with this, and the Chair requested Cllr. Miss. H. Goring is also asked to assist. The Clerk handed the tools to Cllr. Clarke and will liaise with Cllr. Goring. **Action: Cllr. Miss. K. Clarke/Cllr. Miss. H. Goring/Clerk.**

**f. Safety review A15/B1398 roads.**

Lincolnshire County Council had advised, an assessment for a speed limit reduction at the Willoughton and Blyborough junctions has been completed, and the criteria is not met for any further action. The Clerk had requested access to the data and has received no reply. Will continue to chase. Cllr. T. Horsfield from Hemswell Parish Council was instrumental in achieving a speed limit reduction at the Hemswell stretch and has offered her assistance to Willoughton. Standing orders were suspended to allow Cllr. Horsfield and Cllr. C. Reeve to be involved in the discussions. Cllr. Reeve advised the statistics available do not show a great enough problem to suggest further works are necessary. Cllr. Horsfield relayed the difficulties being encountered by Willoughton are similar to those previously experienced by Hemswell and will take perseverance and time to overcome. A desirable outcome would be a reduction of the road height approaching the Willoughton junction to allow greater visibility and a 50mph limit either side of the junctions. Cllr. Horsfield advised Hemswell had bus stops on their stretch with children catching school buses and a blind junction. Willoughton is on a bus route and has slow moving agricultural traffic. School children are at risk of injury, and this should be stressed. Whilst Lincolnshire Highways initially declined the Hemswell request, this was overturned due to the road environment showing a need. Contributions from residents are key and letters of support/complaints will strengthen the case. Sustained pressure is required. The Parish Council should request an Archer Traffic Survey, and this should be done for at least one week. Hemswell noticed a reduction in traffic speeds whilst their survey was being undertaken. A copy of the data should be requested. Hemswell have noted speeding and overtaking in the 50mph zone and have asked for enforcement, and have been refused, despite enforcement regularly taking place nearby in Corringham. Highways should be reminded of their responsibility to keep residents safe and repercussions if this is not done. Hemswell took two years to achieve the reduction as a guide, and the Parish Council should mention Hemswell in any correspondence as a similar situation. When the A15 is closed due to accidents, the situation becomes worse as traffic becomes significantly heavier. It was noted that prevention is always better than reaction and a culture change is needed. Cllr. Mr. P. Howitt-Cowan and Cllr. Mr. C. Reeve noted their full support and Cllr. Horsfield offered to work with the Parish Council going forward. The Chair thanked Cllr. Horsfield and will collaborate with the Clerk to produce an initial letter. Cllr. Horsfield will provide the Clerk with contacts to direct letters to. **Action: Cllr. Mr. D. Cowell/Clerk.**

**g. Daffodil planting.**

Cllr. Mrs. K. Phillips is progressing sourcing of bulbs and Cllr. Mr. D. Cowell is chasing the Co-op Community Co-Ordinator. **Action: Cllr. Mrs. K. Phillips/Cllr. Mr. D. Cowell.**

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## **2509/06. PLAYING FIELD.**

### **a. Bins.**

Cllr. Mr. P. Howitt-Cowan is chasing West Lindsey District Council to request bins are emptied more frequently to prevent a build-up of rubbish.

### **b. Dog waste/Bag dispensers.**

Cllr. Mr. P. Howitt-Cowan had previously supplied information to the Clerk on bag dispensers available to install on the Play Area to encourage dog owners to pick up their waste. The cost was £87.00 each and bags can be bought for £25.15 for a case of 800. Councillors discussed owners should take responsibility for their pets and the law states owners must have means to pick up on their person at all times. Concerns were raised regarding potential vandalism of the dispensers. Catching those responsible is often difficult. The Chair requested the Clerk to continue posts online to raise awareness. The Clerk suggested posters designed by the Primary School could be displayed to remind owners of their responsibility with a small prize paid for from the Chair's allowance.

**Resolution: The Clerk will continue to post online and consult with the Primary School regarding a competition to design a poster to be displayed with the winner presented with a small prize to the value of £15.**

### **c. Bird fouling.**

The Clerk had identified bird fouling on the Play Area slide and in small quantities on other items. This has also been reported by Rospa in their annual inspection. A volunteer has been washing this away; however, the Council's insurance provider has advised the volunteer would not be covered and recommended that this is not a suitable solution. Cllr. Mr. G. Rowles Nicholson offered to use a power washer to clean the slide and other equipment and is aware that doing so is not covered by the Council's insurance.

### **d. Rospa inspection.**

The report identified:

Youth shelter – Worn ground areas.

Picnic table – Arson damage.

Bench – Corrosion.

Overhead bars – Ensure ground surface remains in good condition.

Slide – Bird fouling, ground erosion, spacing between barrier bars, rusty fittings, and access fails entrapment requirements.

Swings – Covers should be removed annually to check for wear.

Bird fouling had been discussed earlier at 2509/06c and other matters would be investigated to decide any reasonable actions which are necessary. The slide was installed prior to new legislation and spacing between barrier bars and access failing entrapment requirements is advised as acceptable.

### **e. Dog fouling.**

This had been discussed earlier at 2509/06b.

### **f. Clerk and Councillor inspections.**

Cllr. Miss. K. Clarke reported litter, broken sticks on the roundabout, a wooden post wedged into the slide, a large branch on the Playing Field, the bin near the Church full and the bin closest the benches broken at the back. A resident had advised Cllr. Clarke, they had picked up three instances of dog fouling in one week.

The Clerk identified bird fouling on the slide, bins, benches and rotating climber, bins full, dog fouling, catching sound on the roundabout, scratched surface on the carousel, dips in the ground around the playboat, loose post in the play boat and loose post on the trim trail. The play boat and trim trail post, and roundabout noise have been reported to Kompan under warranty. Cllr. Mr. P. Howitt-Cowan is assisting with litter bin emptying. Dog fouling had been discussed earlier at 2509/06b, bird fouling had been discussed earlier at 2509/06c, and a resident had offered to rectify the dips in the ground. The Clerk reminded Councillors, Kompan have been rectifying faults found, however the responsibility will shortly pass to the Parish Council. The Chair requested the Clerk discuss with Kompan options available for future cover.

**Action: Clerk.**

## **2509/07. COUNCIL INSURANCE.**

A quotation was received from Zurich which was a saving on the current cost from Clear Councils. Renewal is not due until June 2026, at which time the Clerk will obtain quotations from both companies and bring back to Council for discussion. **Action: Clerk.**

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#### **2509/08. FIRST AID/DEFIBRILLATOR TRAINING.**

The provider had offered dates of 11<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> October; however, no Councillors were available for either date. The Clerk was requested to inform the provider and request alternative dates and circulate to Councillors. The Clerk from Glentworth Parish Council had offered to add collaboration on training to their next agenda and report back. No further news has been received. The Clerk was requested to chase. **Action: Clerk.**

#### **2509/10. VILLAGE HALL RENTAL.**

A report was circulated in advance from the Village Hall members. The Chair suggested the matter required a dedicated meeting and this should be in approximately six weeks' time to give Councillors opportunity to read the report. The Clerk can advertise the meeting on social media to encourage residents to take an interest and attend. The Clerk will consult with the Village Hall team regarding meeting timing. Councillors were reminded, the Village Hall is instrumental in providing a polling station for elections and as part of any emergency plan. The Chair asked all Councillors to make every effort to show their support.

#### **2509/11. FUTURE PROJECTS.**

No suggestions had been forthcoming, and no response received to the advertisement on social media/website. The Clerk was requested to repost and ask the Stirrup Inn if they would allow a poster to be displayed. **Action: Clerk.**

#### **2509/12. EMERGENCY PLAN.**

Contact details and advice are awaited from Cllr. Mr. P. Howitt-Cowan. In the meantime, the Clerk had seen an email from Kimberley Picket (Community Resilience Officer) and responded for advice. A reply is awaited. Cllr. Mr. C. Reeve offered to chase. The Clerk was requested to circulate the previous plan to all Councillors. **Action: Clerk.**

#### **2509/13. ACCOUNTS.**

##### **a. External Auditor Report.**

No issues had been found, and the report was accepted.

##### **b. To approve payments.**

**Resolution:** The following payments are approved:

AR HALL (PLAYING FIELD FENCE RENOVATIONS) £3,488.40

PKF LITTLEJOHN AUDITED COSTS £504.00

LITTER PICKING SEP £122.10

LITTER PICKING OCT £122.10

CLERK SALARY 29TH AUGUST-3RD OCTOBER £287.00

CLERK BACK PAY £38.72

CLERK SALARY 3RD OCTOBER-31ST OCTOBER £229.60

ELAN CITY (SPEED INDICATOR DEVICE HOLLOWGATE HILL) £2,820.00

ROSPA (PLAY AREA INSPECTION) £129.60

This will leave £8169.83 in the parish council accounts.

##### **c. Precept.**

The Clerk had circulated a proposed budget for consideration.

**Resolution: An increase of 4.8% was agreed and the Clerk will prepare final budget for approval at the November meeting. Action: Clerk.**

#### **2509/14. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED.**

18/07/25, 15/08/25, 29/08/25 LALC E-News.

22/07/25 Cllr. P. Howitt-Cowan information Gainsborough cinema.

23/07/25 LCC temporary traffic restriction notice.

25/07/25 LALC notification of Local Government pay award.

25/07/25 LCC flood poster.

29/07/25, 26/08/25 LCC town & parish Council update.

30/07/25, 29/08/25 WLDC parish news.

31/07/25 WLDC cultural activity survey.

31/07/25 LCC TTR Old Leys Lane.

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31/07/25 Resident speed indicator devices/speeding through village.  
01/08/25 LCC TTR Old Leys Lane update.  
01/08/25 LALC E-news & training bulletin.  
04/08/25 LCC TTR School Lane/Grange Lane/Gainsborough Road.  
06/08/25 Cllr. C. Reeve TTR Old Leys Lane.  
06/08/25 Cllr. C. Reeve TTR Old Leys Lane (date amendment).  
07/08/25 Cllr. P. Howitt-Cowan newsletter.  
08/08/25 WLDC survey request.  
18/08/25 Cllr. C. Reeve B1398 speed limit request information.  
18/08/25 A greater Lincolnshire for all reminder of event.  
18/08/25 Cllr. C. Reeve speed survey B1398 Hemswell information.  
19/08/25 Lincolnshire County Council review B1398.  
19/08/25 Community Resilience Officer newsletter.  
01/09/25 Member of the public overgrown vegetation Templefield Road.  
01/09/25 LCC B1398 speed limit request information.  
01/09/25 Mr Ron Bailey update re lithium-ion safety campaign.  
02/09/25 Cllr. P. Howitt-Cowan consultation information.  
05/09/25 LALC training bulletin.  
05/09/25 Lincolnshire County Council TTR cancellation School Lane/Grange Lane/Gainsborough Road.  
05/09/25 Rospa inspection report.

The landowner confirmed they are aware of the overgrown vegetation on Templefield Road, and this is scheduled for cutting shortly.

**2509/15. REQUEST FOR AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS.**

Emergency Plan.  
Village Hall.  
A15/B1398 safety review.

**2509/16. NEXT MEETING.**

The date of the next meeting will be (subject to any change in circumstances) as Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2025 @ 6.30 pm in the Village Hall.

The meeting closed @ 19.57 pm.

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