

## **WILLOUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held in the Village Hall, Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2025 @ 6.30pm.**

#### **PRESENT**

Cllr. D. Cowell (Chair), Cllr. G. Rowles Nicholson (Vice Chair), Cllr. K. Clarke, Cllr. T. Given, Cllr. H. Goring and Cllr. S. Rovezzano.

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

#### **2511/01. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Apologies were received from Cllr. K. Phillips.

#### **2511/02. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/DISPENSATIONS.**

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

Cllr. G. Rowles Nicholson expressed an interest as lessee of the playing field. Cllr. D. Cowell and

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

#### **2511/03. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.**

None present.

#### **2511/04. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 17<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2025.**

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

**The Chair moved item 2511/12 forward.**

#### **2511/12. VILLAGE HALL.**

Cllr. H. Goring gave an update on the position of the Village Hall. The group are registered with the Charity Commission and there are four Trustees who are managing responsibility for the running of the building and the fabric itself. The objects of the charity are to provide a facility for community use. The bank balance is in a healthy position, despite very limited income. The yearly contribution from the Parish Council is covering the insurance premium.

Cllr. Goring outlined the wider use of the hall, including current user groups. The group were successful in obtaining £80,000 in grant funding to refurbish the hall, however the manpower is not available to take advantage of it and move forward with this project. Minor alterations have already been undertaken, such as the purchase of new tables and chairs. The funders have agreed to pause this temporarily until a project managing group can be formed. The current Trustees cannot continue with sole responsibility for the asset. It is unclear who owns the building, and the next twelve months are critical. The toilets are deteriorating, the heating is unsuitable, and the disabled access does not meet current regulations. Question was asked, what does the village community foresee happening with the future of the hall and is there a demand for it? No volunteers have come forward to assist.

The hall is a useful base in case of emergencies in the village, and to hold Parish Council meetings, however this cannot be the sole uses for viability.

Cllr. C. Reeve outlined the position with Glentworth's village hall for comparison.

The Council discussed holding a public meeting to gauge interest from the community with Cllr. P. Howitt-Cowan and Cllr. C. Reeve in attendance. The meeting will be advertised by the Parish Council to encourage as many villagers to attend as possible. The Chair requested that public opinion is sought initially before discussing raising the precept to assist financially.

**Resolution:** A meeting will be held on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> February at 6.30pm. Cllr. Goring, Cllr. Cowell, Cllr. Given and Cllr. Rovezzano will meet in January to discuss the format of the meeting and the agenda. Upon completion of this meeting, the Clerk will be advised when to commence advertising. A leaflet will be produced to be delivered with the Village Gazette if it is too late to include in their publication.

**Action:** Cllr. Goring, Cllr. Cowell, Cllr. Given, Cllr. Rovezzano and the Clerk.

#### **2511/05. REPORT FROM CLLR. P. HOWITT-COWAN.**

Local Government Reorganisation is ongoing and is on course for 2027. Cllr. Howitt-Cowan would lose his position. West Lindsey District Council have assets which have been paid for by the community, for example two leisure centres and a crematorium, and their future is unclear. The new Chief Executive, Mr. Paul Burkinshaw has taken up his post. Men in

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Sheds are looking to secure a third base. Discussion has been held regarding building a new leisure centre in Gainsborough instead of refurbishing the current offering. This would not be anticipated to be completed in time for 2027. The Council want to improve access to a green space and woodland at the rear of the Leisure Centre site. A leaflet is being distributed regarding flooding and should be received shortly.

#### **2511/06. REPORT FROM CLLR. C. REEVE.**

At a Lincolnshire County Council meeting on Friday 21<sup>st</sup>, it was proposed the Council remains as is during Local Government Reorganisation. The infrastructure of West Lindsey District Council would remain, however County Councillors would absorb the work of the District Councillors who would lose their positions. Areas would cover a wide expanse of the county and individual Town and Parish Councils may not see their representatives as frequently as at present. Powers to give Town and Parish Councils more duties and responsibilities have been suggested but has not been agreed. Councillors in these Towns and Parishes are volunteers and adding additional burden on them may be too great. An announcement is expected in Spring 2026. Cllr. Reeve observed increased activity from residents' concerns regarding the safety of the crossroads at the B1398/B1205, particularly on the Kirton in Lindsey Facebook page. Cllr. Reeve has written to North Lincolnshire and Lincolnshire County Council highways departments. Confirmation has been received that Lincolnshire County Council are responsible in entirety for the crossroads. The crossroads regularly have near-misses and accidents, and the topography of being on the brow of a hill appears to be one of the main causes. The Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership will commence investigation to ascertain what, if anything, can be done. Cllr. Reeve discussed dissatisfaction with lack of control/initiative of highways officers and the culture of blaming contractors. The quality of work of rectifying potholes is unacceptable, and diversion signage requires improvement.

#### **2511/07. PLAYING FIELD.**

##### **a. Outstanding matters.**

1. The bench near the teen shelter requires cleaning and bird fouling on the embankment slide. Cllr. G. Rowles Nicholson has offered to visit site with a pressure washer to clean.
2. The fixing on the trim trail is twisted again. This has been reported to Kompan, and the Clerk is awaiting a date for repair.
3. Vandalism to the child/parent swing, basket swing and bench. Mr. Phil Cooper has visited site and identified no repairs are possible, however due to the soft rubber, the edges are not sharp and will not cause any issues.
4. Catching sound on the roundabout. Kompan have visited site and found the deck panels were not sitting flush and were misaligned causing a rubbing noise. This has been rectified, however it has been noted that the deck has warped. Waiting for reply from Kompan.
5. Dips in the ground around the playboat. Mr. Phil Cooper has offered to rectify in the spring.

##### **b. Clerk and Councillor inspections.**

Councillor K. Clarke has conducted weekly inspections and identified vandalism, alcohol cans and bins continue to be full at times. No additional reports of dog fouling have been reported. The Clerk was requested to post on Facebook to highlight the vandalism issues and reports of cigarettes and alcohol cans. **Action: Clerk.**

Cllr. Clarke suggested larger bins may resolve the issue of bins being full, however Cllr. P. Howitt-Cowan highlighted that West Lindsey District Councils policy of only emptying bins if they are more than half full is exacerbating the issue and would take this matter up with the new Chief Executive of the Council on our behalf.

The Clerk has conducted monthly in-depth inspections and in addition to the outstanding matters already noted, reported that the sign near the church is showing signs of rust and was not refurbished at the time of the play area project.

**Resolution:** The Clerk is to ask Mr. Phil Cooper if he would be prepared to sand down and paint the pole and clean the sign. **Action: Clerk**

#### **2511/08. VILLAGE CHRISTMAS TREE.**

The Clerk had sourced a tree from Strawsons at the same price as 2024 and delivery was taken on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> November. Cllr. G. Rowles Nicholson will arrange for the tree to be straightened and secured and to remove the protective netting. Cllr. S. Rovezzano will decorate with assistance from Mrs. Bev Cooper if required.

**Action: Cllr. G. Rowles Nicholson and Cllr. S. Rovezzano.**

#### **2511/09. CLERK ANNUAL REVIEW.**

As the Clerk had no personal issues and none had been received from Councillors or members of the public, the Chair deferred this matter to January, when it is preferred three Councillors should conduct this review outside of a scheduled meeting.

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#### **2511/10. 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 had requested alternative dates and was informed due to a busy schedule alternative dates would be offered in the New Year. No reply has been received from Glentworth Parish Council on collaboration, however it was noted they have conducted their own recently. The Clerk will discuss with the provider new dates in the New Year for February or March.

**Action: Clerk.**

#### **2511/11. HIGHWAYS.**

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

The dog waste bin has been replaced by West Lindsey District Council and Lincolnshire County Council have replaced the speed sign. A replacement salt bin is awaited. Steve Hudson from LCC Highways informed the Clerk on 8<sup>th</sup> October, the bin was on order. The Clerk has chased on "Fix my Street". Cllr. C. Reeve offered to chase Steve Hudson for the Council.

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

Anglian Water have applied for a road closure order for 13<sup>th</sup> January 2026 to conduct further investigations.

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

The Clerk continues to chase. Latest "Fix my Street" update received on 26<sup>th</sup> November was "investigating".

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

Cllr. C. Reeve has taken up this issue with LCC Highways and continues to chase.

##### **e. Children signs near school.**

Previously the Clerk was tasked with obtaining prices for horses and children warning signs, however it has been discovered horse signs are already adequate. The Clerk requested guidance on if children signs are still required. The Clerk was asked to obtain cost of signs and bring back to the next meeting. **Action: Clerk.**

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

Cllr. D. Cowell and the Clerk had written a joint letter to Jonathan Evans (Head of Highways at Lincolnshire County Council) requesting an Archer survey of the junctions of the B1398 and Willoughton and Blyborough due to serious safety concerns at the junction. Cllr. C. Reeve and Cllr. P. Howitt-Cowan requested the Clerk forward the letter to them for information. **Action: Clerk.**

##### **g. Daffodil planting.**

Further information has not been received from Cllr. K. Phillips who is progressing sourcing of bulbs and Cllr. D. Cowell who is chasing the Co-op Community Co-Ordinator. Cllr. Cowell will chase the Community Co-ordinator, and the Clerk will chase Cllr. Phillips. **Action: Cllr. K. Phillips/Cllr. D. Cowell/Clerk.**

##### **h. Salt bins.**

Cllr. H. Goring has checked all salt bins, and all are at least two thirds full. Cllr. Goring suggested a bin near the Church as this section of road does become icy during the winter months. The Clerk was tasked with contacting Lincolnshire Highways to ascertain a cost for a bin in this location. **Action: Clerk.**

##### **i. Poppies/village entrance request from resident.**

A resident had requested the Council consider poppies on lampposts for Remembrance Sunday 2026 and white fences at the entrances to the village. Councillors approved poppies and request the Clerk seek costings for fencing.

**Resolution:** Poppies will be displayed on lampposts in the village for Remembrance Sunday 2026. Costings will be sought for fences. **Action: Clerk.**

#### **2511/13. FUTURE PROJECTS.**

The Clerk had posted again on Facebook and produced a poster which is now on display in the Stirrup Inn. No feedback to report.

#### **2511/14. EMERGENCY PLAN.**

The Clerk had distributed the current plan and new template to all Councillors. Input from Council required. The Chair requested the Clerk send again by email to himself and Cllr. G. Rowles Nicholson in both pdf and word format. **Action: Clerk.**

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## **2511/15. HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY.**

The policy is approved without amendment. **Action: Clerk.**

## **2511/16. ACCOUNTS.**

### **a. To approve payments.**

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

Litter picking November £122.10.

Litter picking December £122.10.

Clerk salary November £229.60.

Clerk salary December £287.00.

Strawson Christmas Tree £120.00.

Resident reimbursement village flowers £63.22.

HCL Clamping £15.69.

British Legion poppy & poppy appeal £75.00.

This will leave £7,715.05 in the parish council accounts.

### **b. PRECEPT 2026-2027/BUDGET MONITORING 2025/2026.**

The Clerk had produced a budget monitoring sheet for information on current spend against actual. No concerns were raised. The Clerk completed the final budget request paperwork for submission to West Lindsey District Council. The form was signed by the Chair, the Clerk and two other Councillors and will be submitted by the Clerk.

**Action: Clerk.**

### **c. GRANT REQUESTED RESIDENT.**

Mrs. Bev Cooper requested a 2026/2027 project sum of £500 to plant and maintain flowers in the village. Council agreed the work of Mrs. Cooper was excellent and were happy to support for the following year.

**Resolution:** A budget of £500 was set. **Action: Clerk.**

## **2511/17. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED.**

11/09/25 Inspector Michael Head (Lincolnshire Police) Update/crime statistics.

12/09/25 LCC Consultation information.

12/09/25 Village Hall Report.

12/09/25, 26/09/25, 10/10/25, 24/10/25, 07/11/25 LALC E-News.

18/09/25 LCC Information on salt bags.

18/09/25 Cllr P. Howitt-Cowan Scampton information.

19/09/25 LCC Local Government Reorganisation.

19/09/25 Member of the public Trees Westbeck Lane concerns.

21/09/25 Member of the public Hollowgate Hill road concerns.

22/09/25 Kimberley Pickett (LCC) Emergency plan template.

23/09/25 Cllr. C. Reeve Teams event (Local Government Reorganisation).

24/09/25 Kompan Report of repair of foundations of two reported posts.

25/09/25 Member of the public Highways issues.

26/09/25 Ron Bailey Webinar and Grant scheme.

29/09/25 LCC Virtual event (Local Government reorganisation).

29/09/25 Lincolnshire Police Feedback engagement session.

29/09/25 Kompan repairs completed.

30/09/25 Lincolnshire Police Engagement session questionnaire.

30/09/25 LCC Town & Parish Council update.

30/09/25, 24/10/25 WLDC Parish News.

30/09/25 LCC Planning application PL/0078/25.

01/10/25 WLDC Local Government reorganisation survey.

01/10/25 KKP Ltd Sports survey.

02/10/25 Lincolnshire Police Request for information (Blyborough).

03/10/25, 31/10/25 LALC Training bulletin.

06/10/25 LALC Martyn's Law webinar.

07/10/25 WLDC Standard Committee vacancy.

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14/10/25 Cllr P. Howitt-Cowan Information Solar Farm.  
14/10/25 WLDC Healthy home leaflets.  
15/10/25 WLDC Register of electors.  
17/10/25 LALC Mock trial invitation.  
21/10/25 Rural Services Network Digital landline switchover training.  
23/10/25 Cllr G. Rowles Nicholson Northfield Lane drain blocked.  
23/10/25 Hugo Fox Website flyer.  
24/10/25 Lincolnshire Police Request for information (Grayingham).  
29/10/25 LCC Town & Parish Council update.  
29/10/25 Clear Councils Insurance Webinar details.  
04/11/25 Webmaster Notification of minutes remaining.  
06/11/25 LCC Updates Northfield Lane.  
10/11/25 LCC Permit consultation.  
12/11/25 Cllr. C. Reeve Information regarding 30mph signs.  
14/11/25 Webmaster Notice of resignation.  
14/11/25 Cllr. C. Reeve Assistance with blocked drains.  
17/11/25 LCC Housing consultation.  
17/11/25 Webmaster Notice of continuation.  
18/11/25 LCC Community Resilience News.

Three complaints from a resident were discussed regarding speed indicator devices, Hollowgate Hill and trees on Westbeck Lane. The Clerk was requested to reply. **Action: Clerk.**

#### **2511/18. REQUEST FOR AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS.**

Emergency Plan.  
Village Hall.  
Clerk review.

#### **2511/19 NEXT MEETING.**

The date of the next meeting will be (subject to any change in circumstances) as Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2026 @ 6.30 pm in the Village Hall.

The meeting closed @ 19.51 pm.

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