

## WILLOUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held in the Village Hall,  
Friday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2026 @ 6.30pm.

### **PRESENT**

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

Cllr. P. Howitt-Cowan, Cllr. C. Reeve, and Hazel Fox (Clerk). 4 members of the public.

### **2604/01. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Apologies were received from and Cllr. S. Rovezzano.

**Resolution: The reason for absence was accepted as valid and approved by the Council.**

### **2604/02. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/DISPENSATIONS.**

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

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

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

### **2604/03. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.**

The owners of the Old Blacksmith's informed the meeting, a planning application has now been submitted for renovations and change of use to a coffee shop/small, limited provisions shop. Questions from members of the public and Council were welcomed. The proposal aligns with the Neighbourhood Development plan in providing a much-needed facility for the village and fulfils a demand. They have had sight of the comments from five residents on the planning portal regarding parking concerns, however they are aware of current parking provision and did not anticipate any issues. Feedback from residents engaging with the owners has been positive. Cllr. H. Goring asked if the surrounding land is included in the curtilage and if the grassed area could be levelled and used for parking. The owners are looking into this as it is not clear if the land is owned or is part of Lincolnshire County Council Highways. Councillor K. Phillips added that the concerns regarding parking were valid, and all efforts should be made to supply customer parking.

A resident expressed concern regarding parking and access to their property. A further resident also had concerns with the proposed development not providing dedicated parking, and particularly during the busy school pick up and drop off times when parking already causes issues for adjacent properties. The resident did not consider the village residents will sustain the business, and it is likely to bring in customers from outside. Cllr. C. Reeve advised the resident, Lincolnshire Highways have an available service whereby for £400, white lines can be marked to highlight parking not permitted if a resident requires a dedicated parking place, and suggested the resident considers this if school pick up and drop off times are already causing issues. Cllr. P. Howitt-Cowan advised, he will discuss the application with the planning department at West Lindsey District Council. The Chair thanked the members of the public for attending and for their input.

### **2604/04. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 22<sup>nd</sup> JANUARY 2026.**

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

### **2604/05. REPORT FROM CLLR. P. HOWITT-COWAN.**

In the light of increased petrol/diesel and heating oil prices especially in the rurality, it appears that only those on benefits may possibly receive help with their costs. After discussions within West Lindsey District Council (WLDC), Cllr. P. Howitt-Cowan advised, bins on the play area and around the village will be emptied upon every visit and will not wait until they are full. This was welcomed by Councillors. The MP who was the driving force for Local Government reform, is now no longer in position and it does not appear any other cabinet member is now steering it. The National Residents for Civic Accountability are challenging the legal position. The government is pushing Local Government Reorganisation, even though it is optional and not a legal requirement. North and North-East Lincolnshire have declined to be involved, and they will be left as is. Full Council is to meet on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April and Annual Council on 11<sup>th</sup> May. WLDC will not be abolished until April 2028 and current Councillors in both bodies will be retained for one extra year. It is not clear what will happen to the assets of the Council. Full Council members were also made aware of the increased litter on the roadside verges. The Council operates with two Policy Committees, the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee and the Prosperous Committee. There are eleven Councillors on each Committee. The new Chief Executive has proposed three new Committees: Thriving Council, Thriving People and Thriving Places Committees. In the future of Scampton, WLDC has passed stage one and is now working on stage two. Food waste collections began in the last week of March and appears to be performing satisfactorily. It is mandatory to receive the bins, but discretionary to use if the black bins

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are not being used for food waste. Community grants will soon be open for applications and will cover two years instead of one year. Cllr Howitt-Cowan suggested Limestone Rangers could apply to plug the shortfall gap required for their refurbishment works. The Churches Festival is now in its 30<sup>th</sup> year and the March conference at the Epic Centre was attended by over 100 delegates. A letter was received by HRH The Prince of Wales congratulating the work of the festival. The 2026 brochure is now out and Cllr. Howitt-Cowan distributed to Councillors. There are 120 churches taking part. Funding is secure for two years. The festivals strap line is “Supporting Local Heritage, Encouraging the Local Economy and Promoting Community”. The Chair thanked Cllr. Howitt-Cowan for his report.

**2604/06. REPORT FROM CLLR. C. REEVE.**

Lincolnshire County Council's traffic programme for 2026 will be focusing on weight and speed restrictions. Community grant funding is available, with £3,000 for Councillors to distribute at their discretion. Cllr. Reeve cautioned, he has many Councils in his area and distribution would need to be proportionate. Lincolnshire district has seen an increase in children in care again and there are currently 871 children. A meeting has been held regarding converting houses for use. As Cllr. P. Howitt-Cowan mentioned, there is a heating oil fund available, but this can only be accessed by those residents on benefits. Diversions across the county due to resurfacing works are causing issues, with signage not proactively warning motorists and as a result, some motorists are being sent on long detours which are not necessary.

**2604/07. PLAYING FIELD.**

**a. Outstanding matters.**

Cllr. G. Rowles Nicholson will power wash the bench near the teen shelter, the top of the slide and the bin near the entrance. Kompan had advised, the twisted fixing on the trim trail is not causing a compliance issue, and should excessive wear occur, replacement parts will be sent under warranty. Kompan have agreed to fit two new deck panels to the roundabout free of charge and work is schedule for 22<sup>nd</sup> April. Phil Cooper has agreed to repaint the sign near the church and rectify the dips in the ground around the playboat. The Clerk requested permission to pay £190 to Kompan to replace the matting under the toddler swing.

**Resolution: £190 spend is approved. Action: Clerk.**

**b. Clerk and Councillor inspections.**

Cllr. K. Clarke has conducted weekly inspections and noted bins continue to be full, some fallen branches and litter. The Clerk has conducted monthly inspections and noted no further issues.

**2604/08. DOG FOULING POSTER COMPETITION.**

Cllr. H. Goring had chosen three winners and prizes of art sets and easter eggs were presented to the pupils at the Primary School. The school had thanked the Council for including them in the competition.

The Clerk requested permission to laminate the winning posters to display around the play area.

**Resolution: Permission is approved. Action: Clerk.**

**2604/09. PLANNING APPLICATIONS.**

**a. WL/2026/00197. 11 Vicarage Road.**

**First floor side extension and single-story front extension. Deadline for comments has passed (30<sup>th</sup> March 2026).**

Councillors did not request an extraordinary meeting to discuss and therefore the Council did not comment on this planning application.

**b. WL/2026/00251. The Old Blacksmith's, Templefield Road.**

**Change of use of the former Blacksmith's to a café and village shop. Deadline for comments 20<sup>th</sup> April 2026.**

Councillors discussed the application at length and took cognizance of the comments made by the members of the public in attendance at the meeting. The general feeling of residents Councillors had spoken to, is one of support with concerns regarding parking. Cllr. C. Reeve advised he has responded with “no comment”. Councillors discussed the lack of amenities in the village and the requirement to preserve the building and improve the visual centre of the village. Council suggested the owners make further enquiries as to who owns the land around the building and considers this is developed for dedicated parking to allay the concerns. Cllr. P. Howitt-Cowan will discuss this with the WLDC Planning Department.

**Resolution: The Council reply with “support” to this application but with the following comments:**

**Whilst the Council are in favour of improving the facilities for the village and wish to support the preservation and enhancement of the Old Blacksmith's, concerns are expressed regarding designated parking not provided for the business and customers. On street parking is at a premium and already causes issues for residents and the school.**

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Highway safety should not be compromised by the development. However, the Council could see no reason why customers could not park on the green area adjacent to the building and it is understood, previous owners enjoyed vehicular access to both sides of the building. **Action: Clerk.**

**2604/10. FIRST AID/DEFIBRILLATOR TRAINING/BLEED KITS**

The Clerk has requested a bleed kit from Inspection Michael Head, who has emailed Dawn Cowling to ask a kit is distributed to the Parish Council. The Clerk will chase up this kit **Action: Clerk.**

The provider of the training would prefer the Council to advise suitable dates before they plan any training.

**Resolution: The Clerk will send a WhatsApp to Councillors requesting availability. Action: Clerk.**

**2604/11. HIGHWAYS.**

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

Cllr. G. Rowles Nicholson advised, Anglian Water have now found the leak and have repaired. A further leak at a water meter at Caudle House is also being rectified.

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

The drains were jetted but appear to be blocked again. The Clerk will chase for further works. **Action: Clerk.**

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

Cllr. G. Rowles Nicholson advised, there are no issues at present.

**d. Road surface Hollowgate Hill.**

Lincolnshire County Council Highways confirmed, the road will be re-done and until such time, regularly sweeping is being performed to remove loose chippings. Councillors will let the Clerk know if this is not happening.

**Action: Councillors.**

**e. Children signs near school.**

A sign has been installed free of charge by Lincolnshire County Council Highways.

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

The Clerk has received a reply from Jonathan Evans (Head of Highways at Lincolnshire County Council) to advise an assessment was carried out in accordance with policy in August 2025, however the Willoughton junction did not meet the threshold for density of development or accident rate. The location has had 2 recorded collisions in the last five years, and the Blyborough junction has also had two collisions. With such a low collision rate, a safety scheme would not be implemented. A seven-day speed survey was carried out in 2016, and the average speed was 51.5mph, however a further survey will be carried out and the results given to the Council.

**g. Salt bins**

A bin has now been installed at the entrance to the village on Vicarage Road.

A reply was received from Lincolnshire County Council to the request for a bin at Church Street, to advise the location has been scored against the Council's Winter Service Plan, and it does not satisfy the scoring system threshold. The Clerk has emailed back to request more information on the scoring system and why the location failed. Cllr. K. Phillips informed, a bin has been installed just before the bends at Whiteleather Marshal on Templefield Road and it is unlikely to be used.

**Resolution: The Clerk is requested to ask LCC if this can be moved to Church Street. Action: Clerk.**

**h. Village entrance fencing.**

The Clerk had researched options and pricing and distributed prior to the meeting. Councillors discussed that plastic would be the best option but were concerned that the cheaper fencing may not be fit for purpose. Brattleby currently have fencing installed and may be able to assist. Cllr. C. Reeve may be able to offer some assistance with funding.

**Resolution: The Clerk is requested to contact other villages which have entrance fencing to ascertain who they purchased from and their opinions on quality. Action: Clerk.**

**i. Consideration of bin near The Bungalows.**

The Clerk had written to West Lindsey District Council to request information on if a bin could be installed and was awaiting a reply. Councillors discussed if this location really needed a bin and taking on board a resident's wish to be consulted, decided that the area could be managed with regular litter picks for the time being and keep the situation

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under review. A bin will not be installed for now.

**2604/12. VILLAGE HALL.**

A meeting has not yet been held to discuss the format of a public meeting and what the agenda should contain. The Chair requested Cllr. H. Goring consider this and liaise with the Chair. The Clerk will then be requested to produce an agenda and publicise the public meeting, including in the Village Gazette. **Action: Cllr. H. Goring/Cllr. D. Cowell/Clerk.**

**2604/13. EMERGENCY PLAN.**

Cllr. D. Cowell and Cllr. G. Rowles Nicholson have studied the current plan and made changes which have been passed to the Clerk to type up. The Clerk will make the amendments and distribute to Councillors prior to the next meeting. **Action: Clerk.**

**2604/14. VILLAGE NOTICEBOARD.**

The Clerk informed the Council, the noticeboard has dried out sufficiently to make it usable again and recommended Council do not replace just now. The Clerk will liaise with Phil Cooper to see if a small section of the door can be shaved off to eliminate any issues for now. The Clerk will bring back to Council should this become an issue again. **Action: Clerk.**

**2604/15. THE OLD CHAPEL, HOLLOWGATE HILL.**

The Chapel is a Grade 2 listed building and there are concerns regarding the condition and maintenance. Cllr. C. Reeve suggested writing to West Lindsey District Council, however action is only likely to be taken if there is a danger to members of the public. Cllr. P. Howitt-Cowan requested details to be forwarded. **Action: Cllr. H. Goring**

**2604/16 POLICIES**

- a. Data Protection Policy.
- b. Equality and Diversity Policy.
- c. Information Technology Policy.
- d. Publication Scheme.
- e. Financial Risk Register/Internal Financial Controls Policy.
- f. Risk Management Policy.

**Resolution: All policies are approved without amendment.**

**2604/17 ACCOUNTS.**

**a. To approve payments.**

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

Litter picking March £122.10.

Litter picking April £127.10.

Clerk salary March £307.68.

Clerk salary April £237.12

Amazon art sets £41.97

Easter eggs £6.00

Cloud Next £59.98

LALC subscription £111.46

There is £5,993.64 in the Parish Council accounts at end 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026.

**b. ICO registration.**

The Council is now registered and has received a certificate which will be displayed on the Council website.

**Action: Clerk.**

**c. Budget monitoring 2025/2026.**

The Clerk had produced a budget monitoring sheet for information on current spend against actual. No concerns were raised.

**d. Limestone Rangers Grant.**

The Football Club are fundraising for renovations to the changing facilities as they are no longer suitable and requested assistance from the Parish Council. Councillors agreed that the club is an integral part of the village and should be supported as much as possible.

**Resolution: A grant of £1,000 in support of the club is approved. Action: Clerk.**

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**e. Bus Shelter Grant Scheme.**

The Clerk advised Council, Lincolnshire County Council are offering grants for new or refurbishment of village bus shelters and should any repairs be required to the village bus shelter, an application could be made. Council agreed, no repairs are necessary at present.

**f. Minimum wage increase.**

The national minimum living wage increases from 1<sup>st</sup> April to £12.71 and the litter picker's payment will be increased accordingly.

**g. General power of competence.**

The Council confirmed that it met the eligibility criteria for adoption of the GPC as defined in the Localism Act 2011 and SI 965 The Parish Councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012. This meant that 2/3 of members were elected rather than co-opted and the Clerk had an approved qualification (CiLCA). The Council therefore **RESOLVED**, with all agreed, to adopt the General Power of Competence. This will be reviewed again at every parish council election year.

**2604/18. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED.**

- 15/01/26 Inspector Michael Head Police update/request.
- 16/01/26 Fix my Street Update on pothole reported Church Street.
- 16/01/26 Cllr. P. Howitt-Cowan Forward correspondence from Lincolnshire Police.
- 20/01/26, 27/01/26, 03/02/26, 10/02/26, 17/02/26, 24/02/26, 10/03/26, 17/03/26, 24/03/26 Causeway One Network Roadworks & Traffic Restrictions Alert.
- 20/01/26 WLDC Local Government Reorganisation Briefing Session.
- 20/01/26 Inspector Michael Head (Lincolnshire Police) Update.
- 22/01/26 Martin Snaith (LCC Highways) Notification of jetting of drains Hollowgate Hill to Templefield Road.
- 22/01/26 Resident Complaint re Hollowgate Hill surfacing.
- 23/01/26 LCC Highways Update re children warning signs.
- 23/01/26 Cllr. P. Howitt-Cowan Copied into email to WLDC re bins.
- 23/01/26, 20/02/26, 20/03/26 LALC E-News.
- 25/01/26 Cllr. C. Reeve Copy email to LCC Highways.
- 26/01/26 Jonathan Evans (LCC Highways) Copy of email to Cllr. C. Reeve.
- 26/01/26 Kompan Reply re roundabout/trim trail/matting.
- 26/01/26 Inspector Michael Head (Lincolnshire Police) Request to publicise Lincs Alert/reply re bleed kit.
- 27/01/26 Resident Information on pothole reporting.
- 27/01/26 Cllr. P. Howitt-Cowan Information for resident re Old Blacksmiths.
- 27/01/26 ICO Confirmation of addition to the register.
- 27/01/26 Resident Request for consultation regarding bin at Bungalows.
- 27/01/26 Cllr. C. Reeve Copy of email to LCC Highways.
- 28/01/26 LCC Highways Notification of signage near school.
- 28/01/26 LCC Highways & Transport survey.
- 28/01/26, 24/02/26 LCC Town & Parish Council update.
- 30/01/26 Clear Councils Insurance Newsletter.
- 31/01/26 Cllr C. Reeve Update on Hollowgate Hill.
- 02/02/26 Cllr. H. Goring Update re Hollowgate Hill.
- 02/02/26 Cllr. T. Horsfield Assistance with Templefield Road water leak.
- 03/02/26 Jonathan Evans (LCC Highways) Information re: Hollowgate Hill.
- 05/02/26 Michelle Toyne (Lincolnshire Highways) Reply regarding road sweeping Hollowgate Hill.
- 05/02/26 LCC Town & Parish News Launch of Local Government Re-organisation Consultation.
- 05/02/26 WLDC Local Government Re-organisation Statutory Consultation information.
- 06/02/26, 06/03/26 LALC E-News/Training Bulletin.
- 06/02/26 Anglian Water Update on water corner of Templefield Road/Southfield Lane.
- 09/02/26 Cllr. G Rowles Nicholson Reported potholes B1398.
- 09/02/26 Kompan Confirmation of repairs of roundabout.
- 10/02/26 LCC Update on repairs potholes Middle Street.
- 10/02/26 WLDC Request for Councillor information for records.
- 11/02/26, 05/03/26, 24/03/26 Webmaster Website minutes remaining.

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12/02/26 Inspector Michael Head (Lincolnshire Police) Update/request.  
20/02/26 Cllr. G. Rowles Nicholson Update on potholes Northfield Lane.  
24/02/26 Cllr. H. Goring Request for assistance road signs.  
25/02/26 H2East Pipeline Consultation information.  
26/02/26 Inspector Michael Head (Lincolnshire Police) Police update/request.  
27/02/26 WLDC Planning application WL/2026/00197.  
27/02/26 WLDC Parish News.  
02/03/26 Cllr. P. Howitt-Cowan Information on planning application.  
02/03/26 Fix my Street Sign installed near school.  
03/03/26 H2East Pipeline Consultation information.  
03/03/26 Resident Information on planning application.  
04/03/26 LCC Bus shelter grant scheme.  
05/03/26 LCC Invitation to virtual event Local Government Reorganisation.  
06/03/26 Planning Inspectorate H2East Pipeline planning application.  
13/03/26 Keep Britain Tidy Great British Spring Clean.  
16/03/26 Jonathan Evans (LCC Highways) Reply regarding B1398.  
16/03/26 WLDC Planning application WL/2026/00251.  
17/03/26 Cllr. P. Howitt-Cowan Planning application WL/2026/00251.  
22/03/26 Cllr. C. Reeve Reported pothole Hollowgate Hill.  
24/03/26 PKF Littlejohn Audit papers.

**2604/19. REQUEST FOR AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS.**

Daffodil planting.

**2604/20. NEXT MEETING.**

The date of the next meeting will be Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2026 at 6.30pm in the Village Hall. The Annual Parish Meeting will take place prior.

The meeting closed @ 20.08 pm.

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