

HECKINGTON PARISH COUNCIL



Minutes of the Meeting of Heckington Parish Council on Monday 24 February 2025 at 7.30pm in the Heckington Parish Council Chambers, St Andrews Street, Heckington

1. Chair's Welcome & Safety Announcements

The Chair, Councillor Spencer (hereafter referred to as the Chair) welcomed councillors and members of the public to the meeting. The Chair delivered the usual health and safety announcements and asked those present to silence their mobile phones.

2. Public Forum

A member of public asked how many volunteers are required for the Community SpeedWatch Scheme. The Clerk said a minimum of six volunteers but there are currently only four.

The same member of the public said that he had been looking at a planning application for 47 new properties on Sleaford Road. He wanted to know the views of County, District and Parish Councillors present. He went on to say that the infrastructure within the village is a breaking point; schools, the surgery and sewerage. He said that 47, 3-4 bed properties would bring at least 100 more vehicles to the village. He expressed his concern about access to the development which is on the sharp bend due to speeding vehicles.

A member of the public said that she is delighted that the AGAR (Annual Governance and Return) is on the agenda and she is thrilled that the external auditors have found that the objections to the (23/24) AGAR to be concrete. She said that the AGAR is a tool that can be used by the public to hold the parish council to account and didn't think the resignations of the Chair and Vice-Chair shortly after the AGAR window had closed, was a coincidence.

She asked whether the Councillors present knew what they were agreeing to (in April 2024). She didn't seek a response to this question but asked Councillors to be mindful when responding to the external auditors.

She wondered how the one individual became so powerful; conducting all negotiations on behalf of the Parish Council and how the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer was excluded from the process. She asked how Councillors sat at meetings in silence, month after month, while members of the public repeatedly questioned what 'land matters' on the agenda related to. She said the public were fobbed off by the former Chair who had implied that it could not be discussed due to GDPR. She said that none of the Councillors had showed any curiosity and the absence of closed session minutes for nine months meant that it was kept secret from the public.

She said that the Councillors had broken their Code of Conduct. Councillors had signed off the AGAR which they knew to be untrue because the former Clerk had indicated, in February 2024, that the Parish Council was in breach of Financial Regulations. She said the people of Heckington deserve a full apology.

Another member of the public agreed with the comments. She went on to say that a 15-minute public forum isn't sufficient. Councillor Wright explained that the Parish Council holds more than one meeting a month and members of the public are welcome to attend and speak in the public forum of any of those meetings. Councillor Stanley added that the Chair is generous with the time in the public forum, often exceeding the 15-minute set period. The Chair added that the Parish Council now hold a bi-monthly coffee morning to engage

with the public. He said that the Parish Council are engaging with the public more than ever before but the Parish Council will discuss this further. Councillor Davison added that the Parish Council, further to request, had added a second public forum at the end of the Parish Council meetings, although not on the present agenda this evening.

A member of the public explained that he is a funeral celebrant and recently held a service in the cemetery chapel; it was agreed by all that this is a lovely facility for the village.

A member of the public asked whether the public would receive a response to earlier questions. The Chair explained that the AGAR and a response to the objections is on the agenda for discussion.

The same member of the public asked the Parish Council for a view on the capacity of the village sewerage system. It was explained that this does not fall within the remit of the Parish Council. There was further general discussion about the proposed housing development on Sleaford Road.

The Chair of the Village Hall Management Committee said she wanted to respond to questions being asked about the Village Hall and the relationship between the Village Hall Management Committee and the Parish Council. She said that the Village Hall is run by a Management Committee which is a registered charity, income coming from fundraising and hire of the village hall. She explained that the Management Committee are also Trustees. The committee is made up of representatives of groups that hire the hall plus unaffiliated members per the constitution. Accounts are submitted to the charity commission. No one is paid a wage or allowance, everyone is a volunteer and their role is to maintain that hall for the village. Members of the public can find contact details for the Management Committee on the noticeboard outside the village hall. The Parish Council are Custodian Trustees. If the management committee fails, the Custodian Trustees step in to form a new management committee and other than that, the Parish Council has no involvement in the day to day running. A member of the public asked a question about members of the management committee and their roles and there was some discussion about previous funding by the Parish Council.

The Chair closed the public forum at 7.49pm.

3. Councillors present

Councillor Spencer, Chair
Councillor Garlick, Vice-Chair
Councillor Atkinson
Councillor Davison
Councillor O'Connor
Councillor Stanley
Councillor Thorpe
Councillor Tucker
Councillor Wright

4. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Bell and Thorpe. The reasons for their absence were noted and accepted.

5. To receive any reports of member's interest, pecuniary or otherwise in relation to the agenda and any dispensations in accordance with the Localism Act 2011

Councillor Tucker reported her interests in relation to 11 e.

6. Minutes

a) Councillor Tucker proposed that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 27 January 2025 are accepted as a true and accurate record of that meeting. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Stanley and the motion was passed by resolution of the council. The minutes were duly signed and dated by the Chair.

7. Report from the County and District Councillors

County Councillor Andrew Key said that Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) had met on Friday 21 February 2025 to consider the budget for 2025/26. A recording of the meeting including a speech made by the Leader of LCC, Councillor Martin Hill OBE can be found on the LCC Website. He went on to say that some County Councils are increasing their council tax by more than 5%, which requires government permission. He said he suspects that more funding will be shifted from rural to urban areas over the coming years. He said that the consultation on LCC's council tax increase proposal saw the public support the 2.99%, the lowest suggested increase put forward by the Executive. Councillor Key voted in favour of this increase in line with inflation. He said the only amendment to the budget was to agree a further 1 million for flooding relief.

He explained that there will be a meeting in March to debate local government reorganization; the next decade will see many changes.

He went on to speak about the enforcement of parking restrictions. He highlighted that Enforcement Officers are at work across the County and stated that nuisance parking can be reported on the LCC website.

He said that at the February meeting, there were questions about solar energy, pylons and the industrialization of the Lincolnshire countryside. The biggest of these schemes not being approved locally, but by local government. He said that the nature of the countryside is being forever changed, these schemes have a cumulative impact. He said that the Lincolnshire Energy conference is to be held in Lincoln (tomorrow) on 25 February 2025.

Councillor Key said that locally he had met with the Clerk and staff from the Traffic Regulation Order team to discuss parking on St Andrews and Church Street; a revised plan scheme will be coming out for public consultation.

He said that he will be Chairing the last Public Protection Scrutiny Committee meeting on 25 February 2025. The order of business includes the Lincolnshire Serious Violence Prevention Strategy, redevelopment of the Lincoln museum and the impact that Trading Standards is having on the sale of illegal tobacco and vapes across the County.

He said that the County Council elections will be proceeding on 1 May 2025, the same day as the Mayoral election.

Councillor Key went on to speak about an Emergency Village Plan and he referred to the Lincolnshire Resilience Forum. The Chair indicated that the LRF had been invited to speak at the Annual Parish meeting.

The planning application for 47 residences was discussed. Councillor Collard said that she and Councillor Tarry had looked at the planning 10 days ago and they too were concerned about access to the development. She said that they had asked for a meeting with the planning officer in charge of the case. Councillor Key said that he would raise the issue with Highways but he emphasized how important it is for members of the public to submit their own objections to North Kesteven District Council's Planning Department.

b) Councillor Collard said that unregistered and unscrupulous waste carriers are taking advantage of residents by removing unwanted items at reduced cost but dump them in the countryside. She said that residents are not often aware that they remain responsible for illegally tipped waste which can be tracked back, leading to prosecution. She said that residents can protect themselves by using a Registered Waste Carrier who will give their business details and produce a signed waste transfer notice. She said that Waste Carrier details can be checked or report by contacting the Environment Agency on 03708 506506 or at [environment.data.gov.uk/public-register](https://www.environment.data.gov.uk/public-register) and at <https://www.n-kesteven.gov.uk/bins-waste-recycling/report-or-request-waste-service/report-fly-tipping>.

c) Apologies received from District Councillor Tarry.

Councillor Davison proposed that agenda item 11. e) is moved and discussed ahead of other agenda items. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Tucker. The motion was not carried.

8. General Matters

a) Polices for review and/or adoption

i) Councillor Vacancy Policy

The Chair proposed that the Councillor Vacancy policy as amended is adopted. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Garlick and the motion was passed by unanimous resolution of the council.

- Advertising for co-option and voting

The Chair proposed that the councillor vacancy is advertised until 21 March 2025. Applicants will be asked to email the Clerk expressing an interest in the role. They will be asked to provide several paragraphs explaining why they want to become a councillor and what they can bring to the Parish Council. The Parish Council will speak to the applicants at the meeting scheduled to take place on 31 March 2025. A decision regarding appointment will be made via closed ballot.

Action: Clerk to advertise the vacancy.

ii) Social Media Policy

The Chair proposed that the social media policy is deferred the March meeting of the Parish Council. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Wright and the motion was passed by unanimous resolution of the council.

iii) Grant awarding policy

Councillor Davison proposed that the grant awarding policy is adopted. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Tucker and the motion was passed by unanimous resolution of the council.

iv) Tree Policy

Councillor Garlick proposed that the tree policy is adopted. The proposal was seconded by Councillor O'Connor and the motion was passed by unanimous resolution of the council.

- Members noted that the parish council has been granted hedge plants for the cemetery from the Woodland Trust.
- Members noted that the parish council has been awarded an Oak Tree specimen by North Kesteven District Council as part of their 50th Anniversary Commemorative Tree Award.
- The Chair, on behalf of the Parish Council, expressed his thanks to Heckington Singers for their offer to sponsor a replacement tree at Burton Road Green at a cost of £200.00 further to the removal of diseased/dangerous specimens.
- The Chair, on behalf of the Parish Council, expressed his thanks to Sleaford Foods for their offer to sponsor a replacement tree at the pavilion at a cost of £200.00 further to the removal of diseased/dangerous specimens.
- Members noted that Trees for Heckington have been granted an Oak tree Specimen for Godson Avenue.

Action: Clerk to write a letter of thanks to Heckington Singers, Sleaford Foods. Policies to be added to the website.

The Chair added that specimens removed recently were being replaced. Councillor Tucker asked that the hedge is appropriately sited in the cemetery.

b) Health and Safety

i) Legionella Risk Assessment

The Clerk informed the meeting that Worknest have indicated that all properties should be tested for Legionella as part of the Parish Council's duty of care to staff and members of the public.

Members reviewed the three quotes received from Urisk.co.uk, Swiftclean and the Water Hygiene Centre.

The Chair proposed Urisk.co.uk (Parish Council Chambers £270.00, Workshop £270.00, Pavilion £360.00, Allotments £270.00 – all costs are exclusive of VAT). The proposal was seconded by Councillor Stanley and the motion was passed, by unanimous resolution of the council.

Action: Clerk to schedule the testing for after 1 April 2025.

- ii) Asbestos Testing, Chapel/Workshop
- iii) Asbestos Testing Parish, Council Chambers

Members agreed to deal with these two agenda items simultaneously.

The Clerk informed the meeting that Worknest have indicated that all the Chapel/Workshop and Parish Council Chambers should be tested for asbestos as part of the Parish Council's duty of care to staff and members of the public.

An asbestos risk assessment and testing has already been conducted at the Pavilion.

Members reviewed the three quotes from Bradley Environmental, Supernova Group Ltd and Oracle Asbestos. Councillor Garlick proposed Supernova Group Ltd (Chapel/Workshop at £297.00 plus VAT and Chambers at £297.00 plus VAT). The proposal was seconded by Councillor Wright and the motion was passed by unanimous resolution of the council.

Action: Clerk to schedule the testing after 1 April 2025.

- iv) Update on electrical testing at the Chapel and Workshop
 - Findings of the EiCR carried out by Quantum Electrical Services
The Clerk informed the meeting that the Chapel/Workshop had received an unsatisfactory rating. Remedial work has been suggested to bring the building to standard.
 - The Chair proposed that remedial work is carried out by Quantum Electrical Services at a cost of £540.00 plus VAT. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Stanley and the motion was passed by unanimous resolution of the council.
 - Members noted that the annual PAT testing has been carried out at the Chapel and Caretaker's Workshop.

- c) Elancity (SID) Warranty at a cost of £199.00 plus VAT (expired 1 March 2024)
After some discussion, the Chair proposed that this agenda item is deferred to the March meeting of the Parish Council pending review of the small print. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Garlick and the motion was passed by unanimous resolution of the council.

Action: Clerk to add to the March agenda.

- d) Parish Council Laptop
The Chair proposed an amendment to a previous resolution to sell the parish council laptop. Members had received sufficient notice of the proposed amendment. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Stanley and the motion was passed, by unanimous resolution of the council. The Clerk explained to those present the reason that she is no longer prepared to use her personal laptop for business purposes.

- e) Cemetery
The Clerk explained that she had not been able to obtain the required number of quotes ahead of the meeting. This work is necessary in order to be able to accurately calculate how many plots are remaining. The Chair proposed that this item is deferred to the Autumn. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Stanley and the motion was passed, by unanimous resolution of the council.

Action: Clerk to add to the September agenda.

- f) Playground Inspections
Councillor Garlick proposed that the next annual play inspection take place in September 2025 (four months earlier than required to take advantage of RoSPA's reduced rate on playground inspections in

September of each year. £80.00 plus VAT per play area compared to their standard rate of £265.00 per play area plus £120.00 for subsequent areas. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Stanley and the motion was passed, by unanimous resolution of the council.

The Clerk informed members that the annual inspection had taken place in January 2025. The reports had been received and some remedial work had been recommended which will take place in due course.

Councillor Wright declared her interests in relation to agenda item 9. a) i) bullet point 1 and 2.

9. Committees

a) Finance Committee

i) Review of applications for funding from the following groups:

- Heckington Cricket Club and to discuss their request to install an all-weather pitch.
Update: The Chair of the Finance Committee, Councillor Tucker said that the Finance Committee are waiting for further information before a decision can be made by council for the award of funding. It is hoped that further information will be available by 26 February 2025.
- 2nd Heckington Scouts Group.
Update: Councillor Tucker said that this is the best application received to date. The forms have been filled out correctly and associating documentation has been provided in full. She said that the Finance Committee recommend the approval of this application and she proposed the award of £685 for camping equipment (to be paid after 1 April 2025). Councillor Davison seconded the proposal and the motion was passed by resolution of the council. Councillor Wright abstained from the vote.
- HAVCS (s26 of the Local Government and Rating Act 1997).
Update: Councillor Tucker said that application form had not been completed as requested and the Finance Committee had requested a meeting with the Chair and Treasurer. The request was sent on 26 February 2025 and as such a response had not yet been received.

ii) Fees for use of the Parish Council Chambers including:

- HAVCS
Councillor Tucker informed the meeting that the Finance Committee which has oversight of the Parish Council Chambers had agreed to move HAVCS to the foyer.

Councillor Davison proposed use of the foyer free of charge. The Chair proposed an amendment to the proposal. He agreed to no fee but wanted to explore with HAVCS, reparation of the £100 per annum contribution for light and heating that had been agreed historically. Councillor Davison agreed with the counter-proposal. He added that the heating had been left on today by HAVCS in the small meeting room 9-hours while unoccupied. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Stanley and the motion was passed, by unanimous resolution of the council.

- Hourly Rate for Ad Hoc use (am/pm and weekends)
Hot-desking had been agreed at the precept meeting in January 2025 at £15.00 per day.
Daily hire of the meeting space had also already been agreed at the precept meeting.

The Chair proposed that the resolution for hire of the meeting rooms is amended in March 2025. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Stanley and the motion was passed, by unanimous resolution of the council.

- Permanent Use
Councillor Tucker proposed that the meeting space is not hired out to anyone on a permanent basis. The proposal was seconded by the Chair and the motion was passed, by unanimous resolution of the council.

iii) Hire of the Chapel

Councillor Tucker proposed no fees for hire of the chapel for the financial year 2025/26. The proposal was seconded by the Chair and the motion was passed, by unanimous resolution of the council.

iv) Recommendations from the Finance Committee further to the third quarter budget review.

Councillor Tucker informed members that the Finance Committee, further to their meeting on 11 February 2025, had agreed to the following recommendations.

- Move £265.00 from the printer ink budget head to computer maintenance budget head as the service provided by Eclipse PC repair is an annual service, charged monthly.
- Move £200 from the insurances budget head to Section 137 which is currently 4% overspent.
- Move £600.00 from the Chambers budget head to the Other Land budget head to cover the unexpected costs incurred because of the purchase of Star Fen. A budget was not set for this area of spending.
- Move £800.00 from the Chambers budget head to the Playground budget head which is currently overspent by 63%.
- Move £14,000 from the Chambers budget head to the Pavilion budget head which is currently overspent by 143%.

She went on to explain that the reason for doing this was to bring all budget heads back to being underspent but since the last reconciliation, the general budget is now overspent by 3%.

She added that the overspend is not due to the Parish Council not being prudent or financially aware. It is due to years of neglect and inadequate budgeting. Purchase of the field at Star Fen has also negatively impacted the Parish Council's finances.

Councillor Tucker proposed the above amendments are accepted by council. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Davison and the motion was passed, by unanimous resolution of the council.

A member of the public asked when the field would be sold. Councillor Tucker explained that the item is on the agenda in closed session for discussion. Councillor Davison added that it is being discussed in closed session as the commercial aspects of selling the field are to be discussed. It is not with a view to hiding any information from the public. He reminded the public that the Parish Council has already taken a decision to sell the field.

Another member of the public asked whether the field had been valued. The Clerk explained that two valuations had been received by the Parish Council today and as such members had not had the opportunity to review them fully.

A member of the public asked if the valuations would be published ahead of the next meeting. The Clerk explained that the Parish Council will decide when to make the valuations public. The Clerk assured the public that the companies providing the valuations have indicated that the valuations can be shared with members of the public. One company has provided a redacted valuation to remove the comparable information.

b) Pavilion Committee

i) Pavilion Committee Terms of Reference

The Chair proposed that the Terms of Reference for the Pavilion Committee are adopted. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Davison and the motion was passed by resolution of the Council. Councillor Atkinson abstained from the vote.

ii) To review current approvals and expenditure in relation to the pavilion roof work (spreadsheet).

The Clerk explained that she had not printed the document for review. The document summarises current and approved expenditure for remedial works to the Pavilion. The Chair proposed the item is referred to the pavilion committee meeting on Thursday 6 March 2025. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Stanley and the motion was passed, by unanimous resolution of the council.

- iii) The Chair proposed that the following expenditure for additional remedial work at the pavilion is ratified. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Stanley and the motion was passed, by unanimous resolution of the Council.
- Richard Wells Building Design to carry out work to the 2-storey extension including additional bracing and insulation at a cost of £1248.00.
 - Richard Wells Building Design to carry out additional work to the leadwork and replacement tiles at a cost of £900.00.
 - Richard Wells Building Design to strip the area of roof around the existing light tunnels to the single storey roof, re-felt and batten tile areas at a cost of £600.00.

The Chair recommended that iv) and v) are dealt with as one agenda item and explained the difficulty the Clerk had in obtaining quotes from electricians.

- iv) 3-phase electrical supply to the kitchen etc (see quote for specifics)
v) Cabling in the single storey loft space

Councillors reviewed the two quotes. Councillor Stanley proposed that SKU Electrical are appointed to carry out the work. (3-phase electrical supply, £3,079.17 plus VAT and loft cabling at £3,305.00 plus VAT). The proposal was seconded by Councillor Wright and the motion was passed, by unanimous resolution of the council. The Chair reminded the meeting that this work is essential for the completion of the remedial work on the pavilion roof.

- vi) Damaged cable (exterior lighting)
The Clerk explained that the quotes received are not compatible. Members agreed to repair the cable in the first instance. Members reviewed quotes from two suppliers SKU Electrical and Quantum Electrical. The Chair proposed that Quantum Electrical are appointed to carry out the work. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Stanley and the motion was passed, by unanimous resolution of the council.
- vii) Remedial Work further to the EICR in January 2025
Councillor Garlick proposed that this item is deferred pending receipt of a quote from Fentec Electrical. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Tucker and the motion was passed, by unanimous resolution of the council.

c) Allotments

- i) Membership of the Allotment Management Committee
Councillor Davison proposed that he and Councillor O'Connor join the Allotment Association Members to form the Allotment Management Committee (comprised on Steven Wright, Sara Weston, Ian Foard and Jim Robson. The proposal was seconded by the Chair and the motion was passed by resolution of the council.

Councillor Davison said that all these agenda items will be dealt with the Allotment Management Committee moving forward. The Committee will have the power to spend the 'ring-fenced' income received from allotment rents.

- ii) Pest control
Members reviewed the quotes from Andrew Priestley and Pestforce. Councillor Garlick proposed Pestforce at £684.00. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Stanley and the motion was passed, by unanimous resolution of the council.

A member of the public said she knew someone who might be able to help with the rat problem. The Chair of the allotment association will liaise with the Clerk.

iii) Hedgerow and trees on the frontage to the allotments

The Clerk explained that this work is necessary as the foliage is starting to impact the overhead cabling. Wright's Garden Services have quoted £750.00 to carry out the necessary work which may involve a partial road closure. Multiple contractors have been contacted to provide quotes for this work but quotes have been unforthcoming. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Stanley and the motion was passed, by unanimous resolution of the council.

10. Highways

Members of the public are encouraged to report any new faults or existing defects at www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/faultreporting or email, cschighways@lincolnshire.gov.uk or via FixMyStreet.

- a) Members noted that footpath resurfacing will begin throughout the village from April 2025. A list of the footpaths has been posted to the website and Facebook.
- b) Members noted that there will be a consultation in relation to amended proposals for road markings on St Andrews Street and Church Street by Lincolnshire County Council.
- c) The Chair announced that the Parish Council has rescinded their request to extend the parking space in front of the parish council chambers further to feedback from local residents.

11. Finance

- a) Members noted the current bank balances as 17 February 2025

| | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| Current Account | 13,354.09 |
| Bank Account S106 | 31,074.50 |
| Bank Account Deposit | 64,103.36 |
| Petty Cash | 0.00 |
| TOTAL | 108,531.94 |

- b) Members noted the income received between 7 January 2025 and 17 February 2025

| ACCOUNT | DESCRIPTION | AMOUNT |
|---------------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| S106 | Interest (January) | 26.35 |
| | Interest (February) | 27.22 |
| Deposit | Interest (January) | 85.68 |
| | Interest (February) | 73.40 |
| Current | William Kent Memorials | 80.00 |
| | William Kent Memorials | 145.00 |
| | JE Severs Funerals | 285.00 |
| | Donations, Coffee Morning | 29.90 |
| | Wayleave Payment Ref HF5144 | 4.60 |
| TOTALS | | 757.15 |

- c) Income and expenditure account for February 2025.

| EXPENDITURE | DETAIL | NET | VAT | GROSS |
|----------------------|----------------------------|-----|-----|-------|
| Pension Contribution | Caretaker (7 January 2025) | | | |

| | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|---------|--------|---------|
| <i>Screwfix</i> | <i>Reimbursement to Councillor Spencer for the purchase of door levers for the Chambers</i> | 46.75 | 0.00 | 46.75 |
| Salary | Caretaker (week 40) | | | |
| Lloyds Bank | Monthly Fees | 22.35 | 0.00 | 22.35 |
| Pension Contribution | Caretaker (14 January 2025) | | | |
| Daisy Telecommunications*** | INVOICE AWAITED | TBC | TBC | 141.76 |
| EDF Energy | Invoice KI-58C53C08-0007 - Electricity supply (cemetery) between 2 Dec 24 and 31 Dec 24 | 77.12 | 17.40 | 80.98 |
| EDF Energy | Invoice KI-DODDBFB4-0007 Electricity supply (Chambers) between 2 Dec 24 and 31 Dec 24 | 382.97 | 19.15 | 402.12 |
| HMRC*** | HMRC overpayment (refund in progress) | | | |
| Anglian Water | Invoice 14518492 – Supply to Cemetery. | 23.36 | 0.00 | 23.36 |
| Anglian Water | Invoice 14519749 – Supply to Cemetery. | 34.96 | 0.00 | 34.96 |
| Salary | Caretaker (week 41) | | | |
| Pension Contribution | Caretaker (21 January 2025) | | | |
| Bradley Environmental | Invoice 95997 Asbestos Survey (Pavilion) | 535.00 | 107.00 | 642.00 |
| Heckington Allotment Association | Contribution towards insurance (Allotment Act 1908 NOT Section 137 of the LGA 1972) | 150.00 | 0.00 | 150.00 |
| LALC | Invoice 15632 Website Management Service | 54.00 | 10.80 | 64.80 |
| BT Group | Invoice M001 B5 Set up costs plus monthly fee | 57.00 | 11.40 | 68.40 |
| Heckington Allotment Association | Return of held funds | 114.00 | 0.00 | 114.00 |
| Worknest | Annual Invoice ref 078316 | 1975.00 | 395.00 | 2370.00 |
| Caladine Lifts | Invoice 49259 6-monthly LOLER (Mandatory) | 120.00 | 24.00 | 144.00 |
| Salary | Caretaker (Week 42) | | | |
| HMRC | Quarter 3 payment | | | |
| The Community Heartbeat Trust | Invoice 24932, Replacement defibrillator pads | 131.95 | 26.39 | 158.34 |
| Salary | Clerk (January 2025) | | | |
| RoSPA Play Safety | Invoice 85670 Playground inspections. | 505.00 | 101.00 | 606.00 |
| Richard Wells Building | Invoice no ref Pavilion Roof Bracing | 2230.28 | 0.00 | 2230.28 |
| Salary | Caretaker (Week 43) | | | |
| Eclipse PC Repair | Invoice 2369 Computer maintenance and back up for January 2025 plus renewal of anti-virus software subscription and new external hard drive. | 150.97 | 0.00 | 150.97 |
| Pension Contribution | Clerk 30 January 2025 | | | |
| Pension Contribution | Caretaker 30 January 2025 | | | |

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|---------|--------|---------|
| Steve Wright Garden Services | Removal of Spruce Pine, Cemetery | 632.00 | 0.00 | 632.00 |
| Donaldsons | Invoice 19 Caretaker Supplies | 40.79 | 8.16 | 48.95 |
| Richard Wells | Invoice 1454/RIW | 1248.00 | 0.00 | 1248.00 |
| Progreen | Invoice 270377 PPE Clothing and Equipment for Caretaker | 333.20 | 66.64 | 399.84 |
| Euromec Contracts Ltd | Invoice 32923 | 186.40 | 37.28 | 223.68 |
| LALC | Invoice 15704 Internal Audit | 330.00 | 66.00 | 396.00 |
| Mundys | Invoice WC/SAW/7140C | 500.00 | 100.00 | 600.00 |
| NKDC Poll | Invoice 00047597 | 2350.51 | 0.00 | 2350.51 |
| Quantum Electrical | Invoice 141 EIRC for the cemetery chapel/workshop and annual PAT testing. | 386.40 | 77.28 | 463.68 |
| Salary | Caretaker (Week 44) | | | |
| Terra Firma & Beyond | Felling of 2 sycamores, Pavilion | 1950.00 | 0.00 | 1950.00 |
| Terra Firma & Beyond | Felling of Cherry Tree and Horse Chestnut at Burton Road | 1440.00 | 0.00 | 1440.00 |
| SRP Hire Solutions | Invoice 179045 toilet hire (December) | 120.00 | 24.00 | 144.00 |
| Salary | Caretaker (week 45) | | | |
| Pension Contribution | Caretaker, 13 February 2025 | | | |
| Pension Contribution | Clerk, 13 February 2025 | | | |
| Pension Contribution | Caretaker, 13 February | | | |
| Lloyds Bank | Service Charges | 8.50 | 0.00 | 8.50 |
| SRP Hire Solutions | Invoice 179481 toilet hire (January) | 100.00 | 20.00 | 120.00 |
| Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency | Road Tax for KN23 DHE (Direct Debit 13 March 2025) | 210.00 | 0.00 | 210.00 |
| Eclipse PC Repair*** | Invoice 2375 Set up laptop, antivirus software and VPN and February computer maintenance and back up | 195.00 | 0.00 | 195.00 |
| LALC | Invoice 15709 Website Management Service (10 hours) | 180.00 | 36.00 | 216.00 |
| Complete Weed Control*** | Invoice 3242 dated July 2024 for service to the cemetery and allotments in 2023 | 890.00 | 178.00 | 1068.00 |
| Lyca Mobile | December 2025 | 2.50 | 0.00 | 2.50 |
| Lyca Mobile | January 2025 | 5.00 | 0.00 | 5.00 |
| Lyca Mobile | February 2025 | 5.00 | 0.00 | 5.00 |
| RBL | Section 137 – Lamppost poppies | 40.00 | 0.00 | 40.00 |
| Postage | Cemetery MACE | 0.85 | 0.00 | 0.85 |
| Supplies for January coffee morning | Cakes, coffee, tea, milk, washing up liquid | 41.45 | 0.00 | 41.45 |
| Stamps | 8 x 2 nd class | 6.80 | 0.00 | 6.80 |
| Supplies for Chambers | Toilet paper, air freshener and washing up liquid (for Andy) | 23.72 | 0.00 | 23.72 |
| Glasdon | Invoice 902827 Dog Waste Bin Liners | 163.70 | 32.74 | 196.44 |
| BT | Invoice Moo2 F1 February 2025 | 27.95 | 5.59 | 33.54 |
| North Kesteven District Council | Invoice 00047775 October By-election | 8253.66 | 0.00 | 8253.66 |

The Clerk asked to bring several items to the attention of the Parish Council including:

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|--------------------------|---|
| Daisy Telecommunications | The Clerk stated that the final invoice for payment in mid-January for £141.76 has been requested but is still awaited. The contact was cancelled on 18 December 2024 but the Parish Council continues to receive invoices and late payment reminders. It would appear Daisy have failed to terminate the contract. |
| HMRC | The Clerk informed members of a overpayment to HMRC. A standing order set up by previously had not been cancelled. A refund has been requested. |
| Pension Contribution | The Clerk informed member that the direct debit for pension contributions had been interrupted. The Clerk has been paying pension contributions manually but she is assured by the payroll provider that the direct debit will be in place by the end of the week. |
| Complete Weed Control | The Clerk explained that an unexpected invoice had been received for £890.00 plus VAT for pest control for the allotments and cemetery in 2023. The Caretaker has confirmed that service was received at the cemetery in 2023. |

The Chair proposed that the income and expenditure account is accepted. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Garlick and the motion was passed, by unanimous resolution of the council.

Action: Clerk to add the February bank reconciliation approval to the March agenda.

d) Transfers

The Chair proposed ratification of transfers from the deposit account to the current account: 22 January 2025 - £10,000, 29 January 2025 - £10,000 and 11 February 2025, £10,000. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Garlick and the motion was passed, by unanimous resolution of the council.

e) Emails from PFA Littlejohn dated 17 February 2025 in relation to objections raised in respect of the 2023/24 AGAR with a view to providing a formal response to the external auditor.

Councillor Tucker informed the meeting that she would be excusing herself from this agenda item per advice from the NK Monitoring Officer but prior to doing so she read out the following statement:

I will not be taking part in either the discussion or vote on item. The reason for this is that I am objector 1. I became an objector to the Agar submitted last year for 23/24 as I had watched the PC vote to submit the AGAR during a meeting unanimously, despite knowing what they knew had happened with the field, despite being advised by their then clerk that they were contravening the regulations that they were breaking the rules.

Not one of you (and I am looking at you all) objected to the AGAR, or even raised it as an issue before, during or after the vote. In effect you were saying to the external auditor, nothing to see here, we have complied with all the rules and regulations in our financial dealings for the year. Which I knew to be untrue!

Now either you had no understanding what the AGAR meant, or you were prepared to lie to the External Auditor.

The spending for this council was out of control, I will just say cups, chairman ribbon, parker pens, fruit teas and a field to name a few.

Having spent many hours viewing the Councils finance before this point I could not let this just go.

I have been asked if the outcome I would like to see happen, if the objection is upheld, is for all of those concerned to resign. If I was asked this question last year I would have said 100% you all need to resign because you have broken the rules but now I can see that many Councillors are trying to understand the rules, regulations and work within them and also right the wrongs of the last few years.

But what I would like to see in your discussion is for all of you involved in voting for the AGAR, to apologise to the electorate tonight and admit to the fact you got this wrong, you didn't understand what you were voting for and you will do better in the future.

Secondly I want every Councillors to think before they raise their hands to put a resolution forward, or to second that resolution and finally vote, do you really understand what you are voting for or the consequences, it is our job to know that.

The following presents the objections raised to the 2023/24 AGAR, the policies that were breached, the assertions in the AGAR in dispute and evidence and response collated by the Parish Council.

For the purposes of the minutes, Councillor Tucker removed herself to the public gallery for the following proceedings and refrain from partaking in discussion and voting.

| OBJECTOR ONE |
|--|
| A) OBJECTION 1 – Objection to the process carried out by the Council during 2023/24 for the purchase of land, which was not transparent and did not comply with financial regulation 14.4. The objection relates to assertion 2 of the Annual Governance Statement. |
| B) FINANCIAL REGULATION 14.4. No real property (interests in land) shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the full council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate). |
| C) ASSERTION 2 OF THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness. |

Councillor Davison added that the assertion had been answered 'yes'.

D) OBJECTION 1 EVIDENCE

In the closed session of the Parish Council meeting dated 26 June 2023, the Parish Council discussed land and lease business for the first time. The following is an extract from the minutes.

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| 19. To resolve to go into closed session in accordance with the Public Bodies (admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 |
| i. To discuss land and lease business |
| 19.1 Proposed by P/Cllr Mr A Garlick, seconded by P/Cllr Mr C Spencer |

There is no detail pertaining to the nature of that resolution other than the proposer and seconder. This is the first time that the purchase of Star Fen was discussed at a parish council meeting.

In the closed session of the parish council meeting dated 31 July 2023, the Parish Council discussed an update on land and lease matters. Again, there is no detail pertaining to discussion and the proposal. The following is an extract from the minutes.

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| 17. To resolve to go into closed session in accordance with the Public Bodies (admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 |
| i. To update on land and lease matters |
| 17.1 Proposed by P/Cllr Mr A Garlick, seconded by P/Cllr Mr R Higgs |

The matter was not discussed again until 26 February 2024. The discussion again took place in closed session and again there is little information about what was discussed or the nature of the resolution. The following is an extract from the minutes.

21. To resolve to go into closed session in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 –

- i. Land matters
- ii. Operational Matters

21.1 Proposed by P/Cllr Mr D Long, seconded by P/Cllr Mr A Garlick

21.2 **Vote result - unanimous**

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and members of the public left the meeting at 1952hrs

21.4.i The proposed land purchase was discussed at length. The discussions included finance options, condition of the land, location and valuation. The Clerk brought to the Councillors attention the following:

HPC Financial Regs Section 14 Assets, properties and estates - 14.4. No real property (interests in land) shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the full council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).

It was proposed that a public poll (via social media and poll slips available in village locations), valuation and searches were completed before the purchase was considered.

Proposed by P/Cllr Mr C Spencer, seconded by P/Cllr Mr T Atkinson. **Vote result 7 for, 3 against. Resolved to carry out a public poll, valuation and searches.**

It is of note that a payment was made to the solicitors on 28 February 2024 at 9.21am for £572.85 for disbursements. This was done in advance of any agreement at the above meeting.

The matter was discussed again in closed session at the meeting on 25 March 2024.

16. To resolve to go into closed session in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 –

- i. Land matters
- ii. Cemetery Matters

16.1 Proposed by P/Cllr Mr R Higgs, seconded by P/Cllr Mrs T Manning

16.2 **Vote result - unanimous**

16.3 **Resolved to go into closed session as above**

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and members of the public left the meeting at 1948hrs

16.i The purchase of 6 acres of land was discussed which had been agreed in principle at a previous meeting. Some Councillors had raised concerns previously via email, regarding price, location, and the future cost of developing the land into a country park. These concerns were discussed at length. The Chairman reported that the professional valuation report had valued the land above the asking price. Public consultation had been undertaken on social media and in local shops. The result being 198 in favour and 35 against which equates to 85% in favour.

A vote was taken with 6 in favour and 2 against continuing with the purchase. Resolved – to continue with the purchase.

Further to the resolution on 25 March 2024, the sale of the land was officially completed on 24 April 2024.

The matter was raised in the public forum of the next meeting which took place on 29 April 2024 and it was during that meeting that the purchase of Star Fen was discussed in open session for the very first time. The following is an extract from the minutes.

A member of the public added that these closed session minute were not made available to the public until 2024. The Clerk stated that this is noted later in the report.

6.3 A member of the public commented that the wording 'land matters' on recent agendas is vague and doesn't explain if the Council is referring to purchasing, leasing or selling land, leaving the public unaware of what the Parish Council is doing.

15. Land matters (was item 16 (closed session) on the agenda

15.1 The Chairman sought permission to move item 16 'land matters', out of closed session to item 15, as this was no longer a confidential item – all agreed.

The Chairman explained that this item had gone on as closed session as all the information wasn't to hand at the time the agenda was published. Previously the item had been listed in closed session due to commercial sensitivity. The Chairman announced that the Parish Council now own a 6 acres plot of land to turn into Parkland at Star Fen.

The next step suggested, was to graze the land with sheep. She sought agreement from Councillors to use sheep from a reputable farmer, at no cost to the PC, to graze the land – **unanimously agreed**.

The founder of Boston Parklands, will then come and walk the land and advise of development options going forward.

On 26 May 2024 the Parish Council held an extended public forum for discussion relating to the purchase of Star Fen. The following is an extract from the minutes.

An extended public participation was allowed to give residents the opportunity to raise questions regarding the purchase of land at Star Fen

9.1 A resident expressed surprise that the residents of Star Fen had not been contacted when the initial scheme of viability was discussed as they would have made a valuable contribution in terms of local knowledge. The resident raised concerns about the impact an increase in traffic could have on neighbouring residents. Security, maintenance and the cost of protecting new trees from deer was also raised. The resident asked that the Parish Council give considerable thought to these concerns before spending any more money.

9.2 A resident asked if a business case had been produced. It was explained that no plan had been produced at this stage of the project. It was admitted that the Council had made a mistake in not producing a business case when attention was drawn to the requirement by the clerk in February 2024.

9.3 A resident asked if the Parish Council had made an application for CIL or S106 monies and was the Poll used for that application. It was explained that the poll results had not been used for that purpose. P/Cllr Mr R Higgs reported that NKDC had confirmed the S106 monies due to the Parish Council would not be eligible for use on the Parkland project expenditure.

9.4 A resident queried why there was no public access to Councillors contact details and why all communication was via the Clerk. The Parish Council will investigate the options before any changes are made.

9.5 A resident asked how the development of the Parkland will be funded and would residents see an increase in Council Tax. The Chairman responded that the intention was to fund the project with grant aid.

9.6 A Village meeting was asked for, the Chairman responded that a Village Meeting would be arranged when the proposed plans were available.

9.7 P/Cllr Mr R Higgs reported that the Parish Council had bought under market value and the land was an asset. Advice would be taken, possible plans would be drawn up and then it would be put to the people of Heckington to decide in a public referendum. If the public don't want it, an option would be to rent the land out, the revenue would exceed the bank interest. Also, the Parish Council has a legal duty to provide interment plots and with the Cemetery close to capacity, the land would give breathing space to buy more suitable land in the future.

E) OBJECTION 1 RESPONSE

Given the evidence above, the Parish Council agrees with the objection that the process surrounding the purchase of the land at Star Fen was not transparent. All discussion took place in closed session including the resolution to purchase the field on 25 March 2024. The purchase was not discussed in open session until 29 April 2024 by which time, the Parish Council had already resolved to purchase the land.

The Parish Council resolved to purchase the land in contravention of Financial Regulation 14.4, there was no business case and there was inadequate public consultation; a post on social media and several notices in local shops. Only 233 of an electorate of 3154 (figures taken from electoral register for Heckington Ward dated 1 January 2025) responded to the public consultation.

The parish council acknowledges that the response to assertion 2 of the Annual Governance Statement should have read 'no'. The control measures in place, namely Financial Regulations, were disregarded.

There was also no reference to a review of the effectiveness of internal controls.

The Chair proposed the above response to Objector one, objection one. The proposal was seconded by Councillor O'Connor and the motion was passed, by resolution of the Council.

Councillor Davison said that he agreed entirely with the comments made by Councillor Tucker in her statement above. He said that Councillor Stanley did raise objections but there were opportunities for Councillors to object to the AGAR. The minutes from the meeting on 24 June 2024 read, *'she said she could not understand why the clerk had not been included in correspondence about the purchase of the land at Star Fen and did not know the whereabouts of the documentation which was confirmed in writing in an email dated 31 May 2024'*. He said that none of the sitting councillors present at that meeting objected to the AGAR despite this knowledge.

A member of the public asked how the Parish Council will be held accountable. The Clerk said that the external auditors will issue a public interest report, which is rather damning. She asked about individual accountability for the misuse of public funds. The Clerk explained that the Parish Council as a corporate body is responsible.

A member of the public asked whether misconduct in public office is applicable. Councillor Davison said that the audit report is not about the purchase of the field, it is about financial governance. Councillor Davison said that if there is evidence of fraud, the External Auditor would pursue a police enquiry.

A) OBJECTION 2 – Objection to the Council's non-compliance with the Local Government Act 1972 section 101, due to the fact that the Chair, without any approved delegated powers, commissioned the valuation of the land and later entered into the agreement to purchase the land on behalf of the council with no sharing of relevant documentation with either the Clerk/RFO or other members of the council except the Vice Chair (who was also aware of the commissioning of the valuation). The objection relates to assertion 3 of the Annual Governance Statement.

B) SECTION 101 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Arrangements for discharge of functions by local authorities

- (1) Subject to any express provision contained in this Act or any Act passed after this Act, a local authority may arrange for the discharge of any of their functions-

- a) By a committee, a sub-committee or an officer of the authority; or
- b) By any other local authority.

C) ASSERTION 3 OF THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.

D) OBJECTION 2 EVIDENCE

There is no evidence recorded in the minutes that the Chair was given delegated powers to act on behalf of the Parish Council.

On the contrary, there is evidence per the bullet points below which suggest that the Chair acted without the prior knowledge and consent of the parish council as a corporate body.

- On 28 June 2023, the former Chair of the Parish Council with the knowledge of the Vice-Chair, entered into discussions via email, with solicitors who were asked to act on behalf of the Parish Council in relation to the purchase of Star Fen. The email states that she had '*concluded a negotiation on 6 acres of land in Heckington Fen*'. The Heads of Agreement for sale is dated 28 June 2023. The completion date in this document was identified as 31 October 2023.
- There is a signed agreement with the solicitors dated 14 July 2023 formally instructing the solicitors to act on behalf of the parish council in relation to the purchase, signed by the former Chair.
- Before the resolution to purchase the land on 25 March 2024, a Report on Title and Searches dated 13 March 2024 was received.
- There is evidence to indicate that the location of the land and the purchase price was withheld from the parish council as a corporate body.

The minutes do not show a record of any resolutions approving expenditure involved including the purchase of the land from the land itself, to legal fees, chancel repair insurance and searches to name a few. It is of note that the RFO was not copied in on any of the above correspondence. In an email from the Chair to the solicitors dated 28 June 2023, the Chair asks for all correspondence to be sent to her to avoid extra work for the Clerk.

E) OBJECTION 2 RESPONSE

The parish council acknowledges that the response to assertion 3 of the Annual Governance Statement should have read 'no'. The Parish Council accepts that the Chair's actions in relation to the purchase of the land at Star Fen were not in accordance with proper practices and contravened Financial Regulations.

The Chair proposed the above response to Objector one, objection two. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Davison and the motion was passed, by unanimous resolution of the Council.

Councillor Davison asked Councillors what their feelings are hearing the evidence. Councillor Garlick said that all this was done behind our backs. Councillor Garlick said he had written to the Chair and Council with his objections and spoke to her in person in the Parish Council office. The Clerk confirmed that there are written objections in the file from both Councillors Garlick and Stanley.

Councillor Stanley added that he was concerned that this was done without the Clerk's knowledge.

A member of the public asked whether the former Chair and Vice-Chair are aware of the objections and the evidence. Members agreed that it will be available in the form of the minutes.

Councillor Wright said that her view is that councillors did not understand the AGAR process.

The Clerk reminded the meeting that the current Parish Council is very different from the Parish Council in July 2024. Membership of LALC and the training being taken up has opened Councillors eyes to the correct

practices and procedures, this was not available previously. Councillor Wright supported these comments. Her view upon being elected was that the Parish Council was run by the Chair and the Vice-Chair and that was due to a lack of knowledge.

Councillor Davison said he would like to hear from the Councillors involved in the purchase of the land.

The Chair said that he voted on the purchase of Star Fen based on the information he was given to him at the time by the previous Chair, he was convinced that it was a good thing for the village that had been sought for 20 odd years. He said it is clear that this wasn't the case and in hindsight he should have voted against it. He apologised and said he didn't do due diligence.

At 9.32pm the Chair proposed that the 2-hour time limit for the parish council meeting is suspended. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Wright and the proposal was passed by resolution of the council.

Councillor Davison went on to say that in the period after the purchase of the field up to the end of the Public Rights period, there were many objections to the AGAR and a challenge was forthcoming. He said that not one Councillor objected to the AGAR despite advice from members of the public who did know the legislation. He said it is no coincidence that the Chair and Vice-Chair resigned as soon as they knew that there had been objections to the AGAR.

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| A) OBJECTION 3 – Objection to expenditure during the year on legal fees and land agents, which you assert did not comply with the financial regulations. This objection relates to assertion 2 of the Annual Governance Statement. |
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| B) FINANCIAL REGULATIONS |
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| C) ASSERTION 2 OF THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT |
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| We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness. |
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D) OBJECTION 3 RESPONSE

The Parish council accepts the above objection.

E) OBJECTION 3 EVIDENCE

The parish council accepts the objection based on contravention of Financial Regulation 1.9, 1.13, 1.14, 2.4, 4.1, 4.2, 4.6, 4.9, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.9, 8.1, 10.4, 14.4, 17.2. Internal controls i.e. Financial Regulations were disregarded, advice from the Clerk/RFO was disregarded and internal control systems were not reviewed.

The Chair proposed the above response to Objector one, objection three. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Davison and the motion was passed, by resolution of the Council.

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| OBJECTOR 2 |
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| A) OBJECTION 1 – Objection to the process carried out by the Council during 2023/24 for the purchase of land, which failed to comply with financial regulation 14.4. The objection relates to the response given in assertion 3 of the Annual Governance Statement. |
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|---------------------------------|
| B) FINANCIAL REGULATIONS |
|---------------------------------|

| |
|--|
| 14.4. No real property (interests in land) shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the full council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate). |
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C) ASSERTION 2 OF THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.

See evidence and response to Objector 1, objection 2.

The Chair proposed the above response to Objector one, objection three. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Garlick and the motion was passed, by resolution of the Council.

A) OBJECTION 2 – Objection to the Council’s non-compliance with the Local Government Act 1972 section 101, due the fact that the Chair, without any approved delegated powers, entered into the agreement to purchase land on behalf of the council with no sharing of relevant documentation with either the Clerk/RFO or other members of the council. This objection relates to the response given in assertion 3 of the Annual Governance Statement.

C) ASSERTION 2 – Objection to the Council’s non-compliance with the Local Government Act 1972 section 101, due to the fact that the Chair, without any approved delegated powers, commissioned the valuation of the land and later entered into the agreement to purchase the land on behalf of the council with no sharing of relevant documentation with either the Clerk/RFO or other members of the council except the Vice Chair (who was also unaware of the commissioning of the valuation). The objection relates to assertion 3 of the Annual Governance Statement.

See evidence and response to Objector 1, objection 2.

The Chair proposed the above response to Objector two, objection three. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Garlick and the motion was passed, by resolution of the Council.

A) OBJECTION 3 – Objection to the Council’s non-compliance with the Local Government Act 1972 section 10 (2)(b) due to the approval of items not specified in agendas in relation to the land purchase process. This objection relates to the response given in assertion 3 of the Annual Governance Statement.

B) (2) Three clear days before a meeting of a principal council –
a) -shall specify the business proposed to be transacted thereat-.

C) Assertion 3 of the Annual Governance Statement

We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.

D) OBJECTION 3 RESPONSE

The parish council accepts the objection based on the lack of transparency. The agendas did not specify the business to be transacted at a meeting.

E) OBJECTION 3 EVIDENCE

See evidence in response to Objector 1, objection 1.

Additionally, all parish council agendas up to September 2024 indicated ‘Financial Matters’ as the heading. Payments were not listed on the agenda but referred to ‘as listed separately’. This list of payments were never published with the agenda or included in the minutes. Councillors were sent Scribe reports with the agenda but the descriptions attributed to payments were inadequate.

Please note that closed session minutes were not published until June 2024 further to a complaint from a member of the public.

The Chair proposed the above response to Objector two, objection three. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Garlick and the motion was passed, by resolution of the Council.

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| A) Objection 4 – Objection to expenditure on legal fees and land agents which did not comply with financial regulations. This objection relates to the response given in assertion 2 of the Annual Governance Statement as well as items of account in the Accounting Statements. |
| C) Assertion 2 of the Annual Governance Statement We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness. |

See evidence and response to Objector 1, objection 3.

The Chair proposed the above response to Objector one, objection three. The proposal was seconded by Councillor O’Connor and the motion was passed, by resolution of the Council.

Councillor Davison emphasised that an objection to an AGAR is extremely rare and the number of cases that are upheld is ever more rare.

Councillor Tucker thanked the Parish Council for their consideration of the objections and returned to her position as a Parish Councillor.

The Chair thanked Councillor Davison for his comments about the severity of the objections to the AGAR. He acknowledged the Parish Council were in for a bumpy ride and criticism was justified.

12. Planning Matters

The Parish Council does not have the power to approve nor reject applications – it is merely a consultee and can submit comments.

a) Members noted the new or amended planning matters received since the meeting on 27 January 2025.

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Application | 25/0137/HOUS |
| Proposal | First floor extension |
| Location | 6 Howell Road, Heckington, NG34 9RX |
| Status | NEW – Registered |
| Application | 25/0162/HOUS |
| Proposal | Application to vary condition 7 (approved plans) attached to planning permission 23/1313/HOUS – Erection of two storey side and rear extension, single storey rear extension and renovation of outbuildings and garden store (revised description and plans) – installation of log burner and associated flue to outbuilding. |
| Location | 61 High Street, Heckington, NG34 9QU |
| Status | NEW – Registered |
| Application | 25/0165/OUT |
| Proposal | Application for outline planning permission with some matters reserved (access to be considered) for the erection of 47 dwellings. |
| Location | Land to the south of Sleaford Road, Heckington |
| Status | NEW – Registered |

b) Members noted the following decisions received.

| | |
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| Application: | 24/0855/LDEXI |
| Proposal: | Application for a lawful development certificate for existing use – Use of annexe as a separate dwelling |
| Location: | The Granary Whitehouse Farm, Kyme Road, Heckington Pending |
| Status | APPROVED |
| Application: | 24/1101/FUL |
| Proposal: | Erection of a single dwelling, with means of access to be considered (custom self-build) |
| Location: | Land adjacent Ashleigh House, Old Main Road, East Heckington, PE20 3QB |
| Details/Decision: | Amended details received 30 September 2024. |
| Status | APPROVED |
| Application | 24/1489/HOUS |
| Proposal | Erection of single storey rear extensions to the house and garage |
| Location | 32 Oak Way, Heckington, NG34 9FG |
| Status | APPROVED |

c) Members noted that the decisions on the following planning applications are still pending.

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Application | 24/1383/FUL |
| Proposal | Extension of hard standing to perimeter of existing farm building including extending associated farm track (retrospective) along with the erection of a new farm shed. |
| Location | Land off Side Bar Lane, Heckington |
| Status | NEW - REGISTERED |
| Application | 24/1403/HOUS |
| Proposal | Replacement of existing conservatory with single storey flat roof rear extension |
| Location | 20 Handley Street, Heckington |
| Status | REGISTERED |
| Application | 25/0013/PMA |
| Proposal | Change of use from commercial, business and service to two dwellings |
| Location | Garwick Farm, Boston Road, Heckington |
| Status | Prior Approval Development NEW – Registered |
| Application | 25/0024 |
| Proposal | Proposed single storey extension to the rear with internal and external alterations |
| Location | 38 Kyme Road, Heckington |
| Status | REGISTERED |

13. Correspondence

Email from NK TalkPlanning in relation to the Central Lincolnshire Design Code Consultation from Wednesday 26 February 2025 through to Wednesday 9 April 2025. For more information <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/050a600e1ca64fff8ea190fb4a2128f8>

14. Email from National Grid dated 24 January 2025 in relation to the Eastern Green Links 3-4 Community Update.

15. Date and time of the next meeting/s

- a) Staffing Committee Meeting, **27 February 2025**
- b) Pavilion Committee Meeting, **6 March 2025**

- c) Allotment Management Committee Meeting, **10 March 2025**
- d) Finance Committee Meeting, **13 March 2025**
- e) Parish Council
 - Monday 24 February 2025
 - Monday 31 March 2025
 - Monday 28 April 2025
 - Monday 19 May 2025**
 - Monday 30 June 2025
 - Monday 28 July 2025
 - Monday 18 August 2025
 - Monday 29 September 2025
 - Monday 27 October 2025
 - Monday 24 November 2025

A member of the public said she had made a number of complaints to the Monitoring Officer at North Kesteven District Council about the actions of the former Chair and Vice-Chair. She said she thought the Monitoring Officer should be held accountable for this situation. There was further general discussion.

At 9.49pm, the Chair proposed that the meeting move into closed session in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Garlick and the motion was passed, by unanimous resolution of the council.

16. Closed Session

Councillor Stanley left the meeting for personal reasons.

- a) Payroll services and payroll arrangements for staff

Members discussed changes to payroll. The Chair proposed that the Parish Council stay with the current payroll provider, Simon Moss Accountants. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Wright and the motion was passed, by unanimous resolution of the council.

Members are aware that the decision to stay with the current provider will need to be ratified at the March Parish Council meeting as the resolution was only passed at the November meeting of the Parish Council. A resolution can only be amended after six months unless a council member gives written notice to Councillors to propose an amendment to a resolution.

- b) Review of a complaint received dated 18 February 2025 in respect of a breach of personal data.

The Clerk explained that she had been accused of breaching the personal data of a member of the public. She did not believe this to be the case but sought advice from two external bodies, both of which confirmed 'no data breach'. The Clerk informed Councillors that the member of the public was not satisfied with the response. The Clerk had advised the member of the public to pursue a complaint via the proper channels. Members noted the Clerk's comments and agreed that the ICO should ultimately make a decision.
- c) Valuations from Mundys and Mason and Partners in relation to Star Fen

Members reviewed the two valuations received from Mundy's and Mason and Partners which had been received earlier today. Members compared the valuations to the original valuations. Members discussed the valuation process, land prices, setting a sale price for Star Fen, the choice of land agent, the sale process and alleged offers already made via different channels.

Councillor Tucker proposed a guide price of REDACTED with Mundy's as the land agent. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Wright and the motion was passed by unanimous resolution of the council. Members will review any offers by the means of 'closed bids' in the closed session of a parish council meeting. The process will be recorded in the minutes.

The Chair closed the closed session at 10.24pm