

HECKINGTON PARISH COUNCIL



Minutes of the Meeting of Heckington Parish Council on Monday 7 April 2025 at 7.30pm in the Heckington Parish Council Chambers, St Andrews Street, Heckington

1. Chair's Welcome & Safety Announcements (25/001)

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 (25/002)

There were three members of the public present. There were no questions or comments.

Councillor Garlick presented the Speed Indicator Device statistics. Due to the roadworks on Sleaford Road, the statistics showed some improvement on the previous month. 92% of vehicles coming into the village were driving below the 30mph speed limit compared to 68% leaving the village. He said that a new top speed had been recorded; on 6 March at 2.56am the SID recorded a speed of 110mph for a vehicle leaving the village.

3. Councillors present (25/003)

Councillor Spencer, Chair
Councillor Atkinson
Councillor Davison
Councillor Garlick
Councillor Gower
Councillor O'Connor
Councillor Stanley
Councillor Thorpe
Councillor Tucker

4. Apologies (25/004)

Apologies were received from Councillor Wright. The reason for her absence was 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 (25/005)

a) None.

6. Minutes (25/006)

- a) The Chair proposed that the minutes from the meeting held on Monday 31 March 2025 are deferred to the meeting of the Parish Council on 28 April 2025. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Stanley and the motion was passed by unanimous resolution of the Council.
- b) Councillor Spencer proposed that the minutes of the Staffing Committee Meeting on 26 September 2024 are accepted as a true and accurate record with an amendment to those in attendance. Councillor Spencer's name is to be added to the attendance list. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Garlick

and the motion was passed by those Councillors present at that meeting including Councillors Stanley and Thorpe. This agenda item is quorate per the committee structure.

7. Outstanding Agenda Items for Discussion further to the meeting on Monday 31 March 2025 (25/007)

a) A review of the effectiveness of the parish council's system of internal control

Councillor Tucker proposed that the recommendations received from the Finance Committee in relation to a review of the Parish Council's system of internal control, per the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting on 13 March 2025 is accepted. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Davison and the motion was passed by unanimous resolution of the Council.

b) Review of the action plan arising from the internal audit process

The Clerk talked through the action plan highlighting the completed, in progress and outstanding actions coded in a traffic light system.

There was discussion surrounding the storage of minutes; the signed paper copy must be kept in perpetuity. Lincolnshire Archives will only take documents that are over 30-years old. The Clerk recommended that external hard drives are also securely stored.

Actions:

Clerk to add the purchase of a fireproof safe to the Finance Committee agenda and earmarked reserves.

Clerk to commence the insurance renewal process for employer's and public liability.

Councillor Davison to audit the website.

Councillor Spencer to review the data protection template.

c) Quotes for replacement windows at the Pavilion

Councillor Spencer proposed that three new quotes are sought for replacement windows. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Garlick and the motion was passed by unanimous resolution of the Council.

Action: Clerk to obtain three new quotes for approval at the April meeting of the Parish Council.

8. General Items (25/008)

a) Newsletter

Councillors discussed the aims and objectives of the newsletter. Councillor Davison said that his view is that the newsletter should specifically detail what the Parish Council is doing and what has been achieved. The Chair said that he has received queries about village events, and he thinks the newsletter should fulfil both roles. Councillors Stanley and Garlick agreed that the local information would engage the interest of the readership. Councillor Gower voiced her agreement. Councillor Tucker said that the newsletter was discussed originally to target an audience who might not have access to the website, social media or noticeboards. Councillor Tucker proposed a 70/30 in favour of parish council versus local information. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Davison and the motion was passed by unanimous resolution of the Council.

b) Process for authorising time-sensitive small expenditures

Councillor Davison proposed that the following is added to Committee Terms of Reference:

"The RFO is authorised to make payments up to the sum of £750 in advance of approval from the full Parish Council when that is deemed expedient. Where possible preliminary authorisation should be sought from this Committee at a meeting or from a majority of the Committee via email or Teams. If such authorisation is not practicable due to time sensitivity the authorisation will be sought from the Council at its next meeting."

The Clerk said that the problem with this type of approval arises when payment is authorised by two signatories or committee members but then is not agreed to by full council by which time the expenditure has already been committed.

The method used to agree urgent expenditure was discussed.

Action: Financial Regulations and Standing Orders to be amended to take into account the poll method used on Teams to approve urgent expenditure deemed to be urgent, in between meetings.

9. Finance (25/009)

a) Year End Finances for 2024/25

The Clerk informed members that they have all received a copy of the Excel spreadsheet bank reconciliation and the income and expenditure lists from the cashbook. The income and VAT totals on both documents reconcile. The cashbook expenditure does not reconcile with the bank reconciliation. There is a discrepancy on the cashbook of £97.12 which is the opening amount of the petty cash which was banked when the now Clerk came in as locum Clerk. The Excel spreadsheet reconciliation is correct; the income has been added to the opening balances and the expenditure has been deducted leading to the current year end balances. If there was any inaccuracy, the spreadsheet would not reconcile at zero. Councillor Tucker explained how this has been doubly accounted for. The Clerk asked members to review these documents for approval at the next meeting of the Parish Council.

b) The Chair proposed that the transfer of £2640.00 to cover the net element of the Fineturf invoice is ratified. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Garlick and the motion was passed by unanimous resolution of the Council.

c) The Chair proposed that the transfer of £10,000 from the deposit account to the current account to cover expenditure on 1 April 2025 is ratified. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Garlick and the motion was passed by unanimous resolution of the Council.

d) Assertions, AGAR for 2024/25

The Clerk said that she had provided each member with a copy of the AGAR for review at the next meeting of the Parish Council. Councillor Davison explained that the Parish Council will have to explain to the external auditors what measures the Parish Council have put in place to mitigate the negative responses to the assertions.

10. Date and time of the next meeting/s (25/010)

Staffing Committee Meeting, 26 June 2025 at 7pm

Pavilion Committee Meeting, Monday 14 April 2025 at 7.30pm

Allotment Management Committee Meeting, Wednesday 16 April 2025 at 7.30pm

Finance Committee Meeting, 24 April 2025 at 7.30pm

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

11. Questions from the public (25/011)

A member of the public asked whether the Parish Council had received offers for Star Fen and whether this would be discussed in closed session. The Chair confirmed that it would be discussed in closed session and only made public after the sale has been agreed. She ask how close the offer is to the asking price. The Chair stated that this cannot be shared at present.

At 8.16pm, the Chair proposed that the meeting move into closed session in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 to discuss the items listed in 12. Closed Session. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Tucker and the motion was passed by resolution of the Council.

12. Closed session (25/012)

a) The Sale of Star Fen

Members reviewed the latest email received from Mundy's dated 7 April 2025 confirming that the party submitting a successful bid have submitted identification and proof of nearly all funds available. The Chair proposed that the Clerk ask how the party intends to cover their solicitor and other fees.

Action: Clerk to make further enquiries with Mundys.

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.25pm.