



Minutes of the Heckington Parish Council Finance Committee meeting held on Monday 15 September 2025 at 7.30pm in the Parish Council Chambers, St Andrews Street, Heckington

1. Election of a Chair (FC/044)

Councillor Wright proposed Councillor Davison as Chair of the Finance Committee. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Malone and the motion was passed unanimously by resolution of the Committee.

2. Chair's Welcome (FC/045)

The Chair Councillor Davison, hereafter referred to as the Chair welcomed one member of the public and councillors to the meeting. He delivered the usual health and safety announcements and asked those present to silence their mobile devices.

3. Public Forum (FC/046)

None.

4. Councillors present (FC/047)

Councillor Davison, Chair of the Finance Committee
Councillor Malone
Councillor Spencer
Councillor Wright

5. Apologies (FC/048)

Apologies were received from Councillor Garlick. The reasons for his absence were noted and accepted.

6. 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 (FC/049)

None

7. Approval of Minutes (FC/050)

Councillor Spencer proposed that the Clerk's notes of the Finance Committee meeting on Monday 21 July 2025 are accepted as a true and accurate record of that meeting. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Wright and the motion was passed by resolution of the Committee. Councillor Malone abstained from the vote as she was not present at that meeting. The Chair duly signed and dated the minutes of the meeting.

8. Finance (FC/051)

a) Monthly finance checks

Members agreed to create a new schedule for two councillors to review the bank reconciliation, bank statements, invoices, payment slips and cashbook.

Action: Clerk to circulate the schedule.

b) Budget 2026/27 (FC/052)

Members discussed at length and agreed draft budget figures for the Chambers.

Water

Members agreed to set aside a figure of £500.00 for the allocation of water rates. Wave have been informed that the Parish Council are not paying any water rates for Chambers supply (see minute reference 28 October 2025, 8. j). They advised that fees may become payable from the date of reporting which was October 2024.

Electricity

The Clerk informed members that the current contact for electricity with EDF is due for renewal on 31 December 2025. Octopus has offered an 18-month contract with a standing charge of 37.45 pence per day, 25.7 pence day rate and 20.31 pence night rate. The Clerk said the energy bill is already just under £800 less than last year's figure for the first five months of the financial year. Members discussed the benefits of entering into a solar deal with an energy company; Councillor Malone said that this would involve surveys. The Chair stated that there may be grants available through the Bicker Wind Farm Trust.

Action: Clerk to speak to energy providers and explore options.

General Maintenance (including security)

Members discussed the estimate received for remedial building works at the Chambers including security and a replacement door in the main meeting room.

Lift Servicing/LOLER

The Clerk informed members that the LOLER is a 6-monthly mandatory inspection; servicing is recommended twice annually.

Window Cleaning

Members agreed that £40 which is the new rate to clean all Chambers window is excessive.

Action: Clerk to obtain quotes from alternative suppliers.

Cleaning/Supplies

Members discussed moving the service to bi-weekly to reduce cleaning costs. It was agreed that this budget sub-heading could be reduced as the Cleaning Service use their own cleaning products.

Action: Clerk to liaise with the Cleaning Service in relation reducing their service in 2026/27.

Chambers Equipment

Members agreed on a budget of £750.00 equipment; any funds not used will be moved to reserves to build up a fund for replacement equipment.

Testing/Inspections

Members discussed the mandatory testing including Fire Risk Assessment, bi-annual emergency light drain, fire alarm, fire extinguishers servicing, Evacuchair testing, legionella servicing (HSG 274 suggests quarterly cleaning and descaling) and testing (including remedials in 2026/27).

Emergency Building Repairs

Members agreed to set this figure at £2,000.00 to cover emergency repairs. The fund, if unused will be moved to reserves to build up a fund for future eventualities.

Rates

The Clerk informed members that the Parish Council do not pay rates for the Chambers; the Clerk noted an application by the former Vice-Chair Mr Richard Higgs, which led to the exempt status.

Health & Safety

Members agreed for the Health & Safety budget sub-heading to be merged with Testing/Inspections.

Budget Head CHAMBERS	Budget 2025/26 as amended	Actual expenditure 9 September 2025	Predicted expenditure to 31 March 2025	Budget Proposals 2026/27
Water	250.00	0.00	0.00	500.00
Electricity	5500.00	1017.82	3250.00	4000.00
General Maintenance	1000.0	886.60	3000.00	3500.00
Lift Servicing & LOLER	2500.00	200.00	628.00	750.00
Window Cleaning	150.00	90.00	210.00	150.00
Cleaning	720.00	212.00	650.00	700.00
Cleaning/hygiene supplies	120.00	110.50	221.00	100.00
Chambers Equipment	1000.00	137.67	200.00	750.00
Testing (PAT, EICR, FRA, emergency light, fire extinguishers etc).	850.00	1548.00	3750.00	2000.00
Emergency Building Repairs	2000.00	0.00	0.00	2000.00
Rates	750.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
H&S	0.00	1109.76	1250.00	0.00
TOTAL	14,840.00	5,312.35	13,159.00	14,450.00

Members noted the budget heads agreed by the Staffing Committee.

Budget Head CARETAKER/VILLAGE MAINTENANCE <i>relating to Staff</i>	2024/25 Actual (NET)	2025/26 Budget as of 4 Sept 2025	Current expenditure as of 4 Sept 2025 (NET)	Predicted expenditure at year end	Proposed budget 2026/27
Caretaker Equipment (new), Repairs and Service	2,780.35	3,000.00	4239.43	6,000.00	6,000.00
Caretaker Supplies (inc PPE)	1,001.55	500.00	739.15	1,000.00	1,000.00
Staff Training	1,476.00	2,000.00	2283.00	2,400.00	2,500.00
TOTALS	5,257.90	5,500.00	7,261.58	9,400.00	9,500.00

Budget Head STAFFING	2024/25 Actual (NET)	2025/26 Budget	Current expenditure as of 2 Sept 2025 (NET)	Predicted expenditure at year end	Proposed budget 2026/27
Salaries (inc staff travel)	44,753.21	61,953.00	26,992.62	62,500.00	70,000.00
NI & PAYE	8,085.26	8,000.00	9,108.63	18,000.00	20,000.00
Pensions	3207.83	3,000.00	2,414.50	6,000.00	7,000.00
Locum Cover	12,640.27	0.00	0.00	0.00	10,000.00
Staff Travel	25.10	540.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Professional and Legal Services	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,000.00
TOTALS	68,711.67	73,493.00	38,515.75	86,500.00	112,000.00

Members reviewed the cemetery budget head.

Budget Head CEMETERY	2024/25 Actual	2025/26 Budget	Current expenditure as of 4 September 2025	Predicted expenditure at year end	Proposed budget 2026/27
Water rates (quarterly)	217.63	150.00	46.98	100.00	150.00
Electricity (workshop)	1254.68	0.00	0.00	0.00	
General maintenance	146.42	3500.00	801.48	1000.00	3,500.00
Project Forget Me Knot	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	7,500.00
Memorial Safety	0.00	3500.00	30.79	2500.00	13,500.00
Pest Control	890.00	500.00	550.00	550.00	600.00
Trees/Hedges	1407.00	3000.00	1450.00	1500.00	2500.00
Rates	576.35	625.00	720.43	720.43	750.00
Reserves for future projects	0.00	3000.00	3000.00	3,000.00 7,367.11 511.00	3,000.00
Reserves for cemetery development	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	20,000.00
Inspections/testing	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
TOTAL	4,492.08	14,275.00	6,599.68	17,248.54	51,500.00

There was discussion about the remit of Project Forget Me Knot; general improvement across the cemetery to approve its appearance and allocation of the Quarter 1 VAT return to the budget head. The Clerk confirmed that Spring bulbs have been purchased for the cemetery and lavender plants are on pre-order for the Spring.

Action: Clerk to chase the VAT return for Quarter 1.

There was lengthy discussion about the budget sub-heading for 'reserves for future projects' which the cemetery committee set at £20,000.00 set to accommodate future cemetery land and accessible pathways.

The Clerk confirmed that once the burial ground is full; there is no legal requirement for the Parish Council to provide further burial space. Councillor Malone asked about burial trends; the Clerk confirmed that there is still demand for burial plots, but space is limited. Councillor Davison asked about re-using burial space; the Clerk confirmed that this is not feasible as the Parish Council records prior to a certain date, do not stated the period of the sale of the Exclusive Right of Burial, if this was 'in perpetuity' rather than 99-years it is not permitted. Members agreed to reduce the budget sub-heading for 'reserves for future projects' to £10,000.00 for consideration by the Parish Council.

Action: Clerk to explore the burial records further once time permits. Councillor Malone will speak to a local landowner about the purchase of land for extension of the cemetery.

There was discussion about memorial safety; the Clerk reminded members that the Cemetery Committee had agreed to repair memorials rather than lay them down. The Chair said that his view is that a significant sum should be spent on the cemetery to make it look decent and safe; he said some of the memorials are historically relevant.

Members reviewed the Pavilion budget head, the Chair reported that these figures will cover the bare minimum of repairs scheduled for 2026/27. A working group has been put together comprised of Councillors Davison, Spencer and Stanley to review the revenue dynamics, the remedial works and the feasibility of completion in 2026/27 with an application for a PWLB.

Further to questions arising from the (EOM or Pavilion) EOM on Thursday 11 September, the Clerk confirmed that the solicitor has indicated that the Parish Council can proceed with the tenancy agreement despite outstanding works so long as the works are scheduled. Arion stated that there is a legal requirement to remedy risks identified as part of the FRA. Enquiries with the Insurer are pending.

Action: Clerk to speak to the Insurer.

Budget Head PAVILION	2024/25 Actual (NET)	2025/26 Budget	Current expenditure as of 28 August 2025 (NET)	Predicted expenditure at year end	Proposed budget 2026/27
Maintenance (Building)	5701.18	50,000.00	36,882.21	40,000.00	20,000.00
Maintenance (outside)	426.55	15,000.00	1,243.98	2,500.00	15,000.00
Inspections & Testing	7,004.99	2,000.00	2,369.50	3750.00	0.00
Special Projects	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	13,132.72	67,000.00	40,495.69	46,250.00	35,000.00

Members reviewed the remaining six budget heads (based on the RFO's initial calculations) and they agreed provisionally to the following for consideration by the Parish Council.

General/Administration	40,000.00
Allotments	2,500.00
Playgrounds	3,000.00
Section 137	5,000.00
Caretaker/Village Maintenance (including trees)	10,000.00
Events	500.00
MUGA (to be added to Pavilion Budget Head under Special Projects)	6,000.00

Members discuss the Caretaker/Village Maintenance sub-heading. The Clerk informed the meeting that the Staffing Committee had discussed the sale of the green mower/sweeper due to the high maintenance and repairs costs; this financial year already, it has cost in excess of £2,000.00 to repair and service. Councillor Malone added that there will also be the electricity charges for the Village Green to take into account under this budget head.

The draft budget for 2026/27 sits at £279,450.00. The precept for the 2025/26 financial year is £110,746.00. If the precept were to remain at this rate, there would be a deficit of £168,704.00. This led to lengthy discussion about the options available to the Parish Council. Councillor Malone asked whether the precept has been set too low historically; the Clerk said she also works for a small parish of around 120 households in South Kesteven and their precept sits at just over £8k with just one employee and has no assets. Heckington has well over 1600 households, the precept sits at £110k and the Parish Council is responsible for two employees, the Playing Field and Pavilion, the Cemetery, the Allotments and the Parish Council Chambers; given this information members agreed that the precept has been set at a rate for a parish without assets. Members discussed how the purchase of Star Fen had negatively affected the financial standing of the Parish Council.

Members explored the available options:

1. Raise precept (Members reviewed the impact of an increase on the Council tax rate per household).
2. Selling Chambers and/or leasing back the property (the saleability of the Parish Council Chambers was discussed).
3. PWLB application.

Councillor Davison proposed that Pygott and Crone are appointed to carry out a valuation on the Parish Council Chambers. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Wright and the motion was passed unanimously by resolution of the Council.

Councillor Davison proposed that the draft budget figures are presented to the Parish Council on 29 September 2025 and that there is a discussion about the sale of the Parish Council Chambers in open

session. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Spencer and the motion was passed unanimously by resolution of the Committee.

Actions:

Clerk to email the draft budget document to councillors for consideration at the September meeting of the Parish Council.

Clerk to add the MUGA proposal to the September agenda for consideration.

Clerk to obtain precept and parish statistics for North Kesteven.

Clerk to speak to the Finance Department at North Kesteven District Council for advice on increases to the precept.

9. Chambers (FC/052)

a) Updates

- i) Legionella remedial work and testing approved by the Parish Council, has been scheduled for Tuesday 14 October 2025. The works have been split across two financial years due to budgetary constraints.
- ii) A date for the survey by AccessAble for both the Parish Council Chambers and the Pavilion with a view to making recommendations about accessibility is pending.
- iii) The Clerk informed the meeting that the Chambers is up to date with routine testing. Further to Fire Warden Training today with Arion, there are some additional checks to be incorporated into the routine including weekly fire extinguisher checks and fire drills and monthly fire door checks. The Clerk informed Members that when the Library is open, all entrances should be unlocked including the office entrance which is currently operated by a master key.

Action: Clerk to add to the September agenda for the Parish Council.

- c) Security - Members agreed to defer a decision about the installation of a security alarm at the Chambers pending further discussion about the sale of the building. The Chair said further quotes are also required. The Clerk informed members that the number of quotes being sought is taking up an inordinate amount of her time. She asked members to consider a review of obtaining quotes in Standing Orders.
- d) Roller shutter door - Members noted that a repair had been made to the roller shutter door at a cost of £40.00. This will need to be ratified at the September meeting of the Parish Council.
- e) Replacement door – Members reviewed estimates for the installation of a door in the main meeting room. The quotes ranged from £747.00 to £974.00. Members agreed to defer this item pending further enquiries with Arion.
Action: Clerk to make enquiries with Arion as to whether the sliding door could be removed and not replaced.

- f) Window Cleaner – The current supplier has quoted £40 to clean the windows on all three faces of the building.
Action: Clerk to pursue quotes/Clerk to liaise with the locum Caretaker regarding window cleaning.

10. Date and time of the next meeting (FC/053)

Thursday 16 October at 7.30pm

11. Questions from the public (FC/054)

None

The Chair did not move the meeting into closed session to review an estimate for remedial work at the Parish Council Chambers. It was agreed that this will be discussed again at a future date pending further discussion about the sale of the Parish Council Chambers.

The Chair closed the meeting at 21.23pm.

