

HECKINGTON PARISH COUNCIL



Minutes of the Heckington Parish Council Cemetery Committee meeting held Tuesday 1 September 2026 at 7.30pm in the Parish Council Chambers, St Andrews Street, Heckington

Councillor Gower welcomed members to the meeting and delivered the usual health and safety announcements. She asked those present to silence their mobile devices.

It was noted that Councillors Tucker and Young have been appointed the Cemetery Committee further to the resignations of former Councillors O'Connor and Garlick.

1. Election of a Chair (CC/26/001)

Councillor Cocks proposed Councillor Tucker as Chair of the Cemetery Committee. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Gower and the motion was passed by resolution of the Committee.

2. Chair's Welcome (CC/26/002)

The Chair, Councillor Tucker

The Chair said that the Committee and the Caretaker should be proud of the improvements that have been made to the cemetery in the last 12-months. She drew on a memory when she was sat in the cemetery with the Clerk and recalled saying that Heckington Cemetery is a miserable place to be buried. She said that the cemetery now needs to be 'dressed' as burials are a source of income for the Parish Council other than the precept.

The Chair read out the following correspondence from the ICCM dated 1 September 2026. The Government has today issued a statement setting out its intention to bring forward comprehensive proposals for the regulation of the funeral sector following the sentencing of Robert Bush of Legacy Independent Funeral Directors in Hull.

3. Public Forum (CC/26/003)

There were two members of the public present.

A member of the public said she thought the Committee could better publicise the progress being made at the cemetery and future plans.

4. Councillors present (CC/26/004)

Councillor Paul Cocks
Councillor Lorna Gower
Councillor Sue Tucker, Chair
Councillor Valerie Young

5. Apologies (CC/26/005)

None.

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 (CC/26/006)

None.

7. Minutes (CC/26/007)

Councillor Gower proposed that the Clerk's notes of the meeting dated 26 February 2026 are accepted as a true and accurate record of that meeting despite only two members of the current Committee being present the February 2026 meeting, due to a change of Committee membership further to resignations. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Cocks and the motion was passed unanimously by resolution of the Committee.

8. General Matters (CC/26/008)

- a) Summary of outstanding actions further to the cemetery committee meeting on 26 February 2026
- Fencing repairs (agenda item under d) for further discussion – The local Blacksmith, Nic Marshall hasn't been able to give an estimate for repairs as the state of the metalwork cannot be determined from a visual inspection.
 - Biodiversity policy
 - Clearance of the grounds (on-going)
 - Vision board
 - Noticeboard is on order
 - Plot the war graves on the cemetery plan
 - Painting of cemetery gates
 - Explore easy fundraising.
- b) The benefits of ring-fencing cemetery income for reserves
The Chair proposed that the Cemetery Committee agree to make a recommendation to the Parish Council to ring-fence all cemetery income until such time as the cemetery meets the required health and safety and design standards. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Cocks and the motion was passed unanimously by resolution of the Committee.
- c) Lincolnshire County Councillor Community Grant Funding for 2026/27 Strategic Fund
The Chair reported that the Clerk had made enquiries with County Councillor East, on her behalf, to ascertain if there is any funding for eco burials and memorial repairs. He indicated that the Strategic Fund may be suitable for memorial repairs. The Clerk explained that memorial repairs are required from a health and safety perspective. Councillors debated the cost of memorial repairs against design and appearance. **The Chair proposed that she is granted permission to explore the Strategic Fund with the Finance Committee. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Gower and the motion was passed unanimously by resolution of the Committee.**
Action: The Chair to explore the remit and application of the Strategic Fund with the Clerk.
- d) Cemetery Walkabout, August 2026 Report - Project Forget Me Knot
The Chair summarised the contents of the report (which can be found on the Parish Council website and as an addendum to these minutes).
- The lavender will be pruned mid to late September.
 - The cemetery gates will be repainted mid to late September.
 - The tap at the cemetery gate has been removed.
 - The Yew trees are regenerating and it was agreed to postpone the purchase of replacement specimens until Spring 2027. The ground around the Yew trees is to be cleared and retuned to lawn.
 - The Elder will be removed during September to November.
 - Memorials will be jet washed during the week commencing 31 August 2026.
 - The grass waste will be cleared by the end of October as this has been composting to act as a fertiliser for the Forget Me Knot flower bed.
 - Low hanging branches throughout will be removed between September to November.
 - The Caretaker will continue to uncover graves which over time have been hidden by earth.

- There will be further consultation with Nic Marshall in relation to estimate for restoration or repair of the perimeter fencing.
 - The noticeboard has been ordered and will be installed by the Caretaker along with cemetery signage.
 - Christmas wreaths will be removed per the Cemetery Rules and Regulations.
 - The tall weeds have been removed.
 - Waste items stored to the side of the COSHH shed have been disposed of.
 - Soil waste at the Molan's perimeter will be removed to replenish sunken graves.
 - Signage for 'funeral car parking only' has been ordered.
 - Benches are routinely jet-washed on a bi-monthly basis.
- Members discussed the provision of composite benches but it was agreed to revisit this at a later date.

Members discussed the replacement of the current stock of memorial benches but it was agreed to defer this to the October meeting of the Committee.

The Chair proposed that the siting of benches in the cemetery is suspended. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Young and the motion was passed unanimously by resolution of the Committee.

- Pest control is being addressed humanely.
 - The pleached Beech trees are expected to recover.
 - The hosepipe has been removed.
 - The temporary fencing around Mr Sheppard's grave will be removed by the end of October.
 - The parking area next to the Chapel is insufficient.
Action: Caretaker to bring a plan and costings to the October meeting of the Committee. Clerk to check the grave plan.
 - Two quotes are pending for the painting and redecoration of the Chapel and Workshop windows.
 - Graves are being levelled off and this work is on-going.
 - The burial area behind the workshop not marked by memorials could be marked out with box hedging and used to site flower beds and benches.
Action: Clerk to review the burial plan and records. The Chair with the assistance of the Clerk and the Caretaker will collaborate to draw up plans using AI.
 - The plant machinery for grounds clearance has been scheduled for the week commencing 7 September 2026.
- **The Chair proposed the purchase of Forget Me Knot seeds up to a cost of £79.92 (8-packs – 120,000 seeds). The proposal was seconded by Councillor Gower and the motion was passed unanimously by resolution of the Committee.**
 - **The Chair proposed the purchase of six bags of Post Crete at a cost of £4.58 per bag (Green Barn Timbers) for the installation of the cemetery noticeboard, signage and to fill voids beneath grave kerbing caused by rodents and mammals. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Gower and the motion was passed unanimously by resolution of the Committee.**
 - **The Chair proposed the ratification of the purchase of a funeral car only sign at a cost of £45.00 plus VAT plus delivery to discourage parking in the designated parking bay on the day of a funeral. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Cocks and the motion was passed unanimously by resolution of the Committee.**
 - Purchase/creation of a purpose-built composting area
Members discussed the purchase of a gated composting area and provided an image of a potential design to be sited in Molan's corner of the cemetery.

Action: Caretaker to obtain measurements so that design ideas and costings can be obtained for the October meeting of the Committee.

- Replacement/refurbishment of the cemetery perimeter fencing
See above.
- Parking area
See above.
- Sanding and repainting of the chapel and workshop windows
Quotes are pending.
- Quotes for the windows are being received – 2 companies have been in to look at the work and their quotes are awaited. The workshop has its own budget.
- Creation of a wildflower area.
See above.
- Removal of the apple trees from the cemetery
Members discussed removing the fruiting trees from the cemetery and their replacement with specimens including pleached Beech trees (per the tree policy). **The Chair proposed the removal of the apple trees. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Cocks and the motion was passed by resolution of the Committee. Councillor Young voted against the proposal.**
- Digger Hire
The Chair proposed the ratification of the hire of a digger and dump truck at a cost of £420.00 plus delivery for a period of 7 days. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Gower and the motion was passed unanimously by resolution of the Committee.

e) Grave-digging

Members of the Committee noted that the Caretaker has successfully completed his grave-digger training.

The Chair asked what the cost benefit is of doing the gravedigging in-house.

The Clerk explained that this should add to the income stream as current rates from an outsourced company are £50.00 per cremation plot and £400.00 per burial plot. The Clerk said that there is also the assurance that in-house grave-digging meets the Parish Council's health and safety standards.

- i) Members noted that the equipment will cost in the region of £7500.00. Details of this can be found in the template budget document for 2027/28. This will be discussed further as part of the budgetary processes for the forthcoming financial year.

f) The siting of memorials on the Eastern Border of the cemetery for burials and the interment of cremated remains

- Members noted that there is no legislative requirement regarding the orientation of burials (Christian burials are generally east to west, Muslim burials oriented towards Mecca).
The Chair proposed that for any burials on the Eastern border of the cemetery, if buried East to West, the memorial is placed at the foot of the grave or West to East at the head of the grave, sited closest to the perimeter fencing. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Cocks and the motion was passed unanimously by resolution of the Committee.

g) Confirmation that Heckington Parish Council operates according to best practice per the ICCM's Guiding Principles as follow:

1. No coffin/container/shroud shall be accepted at a cemetery unless the name of the deceased therein is clearly shown.
2. The identity shown on the coffin/container/shroud shall be verified at every funeral.

This is clearly written into Heckington Parish Council's cemetery rules and regulations paragraph 4.6.5.

The Chair proposed that the Committee agreed that this currently forms part of policy and must be adhered to, the proposal was seconded by Councillor Gower, and the motion was passed unanimously by resolution of the Committee.

h) Budget Preparation 2027/28

The Clerk asked members to review the budget 2027/28 spreadsheet including cell notes in preparation for the October meeting of the Committee.

- i) Members agreed to defer the agenda item: to discuss the need to recruit a part-time employee for maintenance of the cemetery.

Action: Clerk to add to the agenda for the October meeting of the Committee.

9. Health and Safety (CC/26/009)

a) Update from the Clerk in relation to memorial inspections and repairs.

- i) Members noted that Set in Stone Memorials will be on site on Monday 7 September 2026 to repair some of our larger memorials with three masons on site.

- 4 March 2026 (0728) £1124.00 excluding VAT (2025/26)
- 19 March 2026 (0748) £1326.00 excluding VAT (2026/27)
- 12 May 2026 (0768) £1146.00 excluding VAT (2026/27)
- 28 May 2026 (0785) £1151.00 excluding VAT (2026/27)
- 4 June 2026 £1359.00 excluding VAT (2026/27)

- ii) Councillor Gower proposed that some of the larger memorials, that cannot be repaired on 7 September 2026, are temporarily laid down. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Cocks and the motion was passed by resolution of the Committee. The Chair voted against the motion.

Action: The Clerk will ensure that these memorials are prioritised for repair.

9. Date and time of the next meeting (CC/26/010)

Members agreed to meet again in October 2026. This will be organised via Teams.

11. Questions from the public (26/26/011)

The Chair closed the meeting at 21.10 pm.