

Minutes of the annual meeting of Deeping St Nicholas Parish Council held on Tuesday the 27th of May commencing at 7pm in Deeping St Nicholas Parish Church, Main Road, Deeping St Nicholas.

Present

Parish Councillors: Deborah Croyle, Rob Jarvis, Jim Mitchell, Sharon Hall, Suzanne Chappell, Andy Croyle, Paul Barrett, Louise McGuinness and Nicky Mansellas-Cooper

County Councillors: Raymond Connell

Clerk: Mrs A Harrison

11 Parishioners

1. Election of a Chairman and signing of the Acceptance of Office

Deborah Croyle was nominated by Rob Jarvis and seconded by Jim Mitchell.

A vote was taken and it was resolved to elect Deborah Croyle as Chair for the ensuing year.

a. Chairman's Announcements

The Chair thanked everyone for their support and commitment including all the volunteers of the various committees throughout the village.

The Council have achieved a lot, including the new Interactive speed signs at Hop Pole, a new book box and bold plans for the playing fields. St Nicholas Park has been completed and the others are in the pipeline for this year.

Members have given up a lot of their time, working as a team to achieve what the residents have asked us to do for this village.

Thanks also to the Clerk and the Vice Chairman for their invaluable support.

Moving forward to continue the work that has already been achieved and also to carry out the wishes of the residents with the results of this year's Parish Plan.

2. Election of a Vice Chairman and signing of the Acceptance of Office

Rob Jarvis was nominated by Jim Mitchell and seconded by Nicky Mansellas-Cooper.

A vote was taken and it was resolved to elect Rob Jarvis as Vice Chair for the ensuing year.

a. Vice Chairman's Announcements

The Vice Chair thanked everyone for their support and vowed to continue the work that he has started with the playgrounds and also the Good Neighbour Scheme and the Neighbourhood Watch.

Public Forum

Cllr Raymond Condell introduced himself and advised the Council to contact him with any issues and he will do his best to resolve them.

3. To resolve the co-option into the vacant seat, as recommended by the HR Committee.

There were 3 applicants for the vacant seat left by Owen McGuinness.

A summary of each of the candidates, along with a copy of their initial application were circulated prior to the meeting.

A vote was taken with a clear winner and it was resolved to Co-opt Anna Spencer into the vacant seat.

4. To receive and approve reasons for absence.

Apologies were approved for Nicholas Watts.

5. To resolve membership of the following Committees: -

- a. **HR:** no change - L McGuinness (Chair), A Croyle, S Chappell, J Mitchell and P Barrett
- b. **Finance:** no change – D Croyle (Chair), A Croyle, N Watts, S Hall and P Barrett
- c. **Planning:** A Croyle (Chair), J Mitchell, R Jarvis, N Watts with N Mansellas-Cooper taking the vacant seat
- d. **Playing Fields:** R Jarvis (chair), L McGuinness, J Mitchell, D Croyle and N Mansellas-Cooper taking the vacant seat
- e. **Highways & Footpaths:** currently N Watts (Chair), S Hall, S Chappell, P Barrett and Anna Spencer taking the vacant seat

6. To receive Declarations of Interest, in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 being any pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest in agenda items not previously recorded on Member's Register of Interests.

There were none.

7. To approve the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held in March.

The Minutes were Proposed by RJ and seconded by JM and all agreed.

The Minutes were signed by the Chair as a true record.

8. Matters arising from the Minutes, *(not included in this Agenda)*.

There were none

9. To receive the Clerk's Report on matters outstanding.

The report had been circulated prior to the meeting.

As there had been no reply received, the Clerk was asked to follow-up the email sent to a DSJ Parish Councillor, regarding the RBL funds.

ACTION: Clerk

10. To receive the HR Committee Report and resolve to approve any recommendations therein.

LM requested that items 10 and 11 be moved into closed session.

All agreed.

11. To resolve for the Council to adopt the following policies.

- a. Zero Tolerance Policy
- b. Deeping St Nicholas PC Standing Orders - updated 2025

12. To discuss any Highways Matters

SC gave a verbal update to the members, as follows:

- Interactive speed signs are up and running
- Tree is hindering one of the signs which will be cut back very soon.
- SC urged members to report any issues on Fix My Street.

Cllr Condell suggested that if there were any longstanding issues that haven't been resolved, then pass them to him through the Clerk.

- AC advised that he had reported various issues and although some have been fixed, others have been responded to as fixed although nothing has actually happened.

Cllr Condell is proposing a drive around his ward, with the Highways team and asked that any problem areas be communicated to him so that he can highlight them to the officers.

13. Community Speed Watch.

PB advised that there had been no activity recently due to one of the team being seriously ill. This has left him with too few members.

RJ suggested that they join forces, as he has quite a number of people trained and ready to go out.

PB advised that a rota has been requested although he was not sure who had requested it.

The Chair encouraged PB to find out who has requested it, so that a rota can be put together and sent off.

The interactive signs have been effective.

14. Finance Matters**a. To receive Finance Reports from the RFO**

The Bank Reconciliations for March and April were approved by the Chair

The Budget/Summary report was received.

b. To approve Invoices for Payment (separate sheet)

RJ proposed and NM-C seconded and all agreed. It was resolved to approve payments totalling £5564 + VAT which included £583.34 for the planning application fee for the MUGA at Littleworth park, 3 grass cuts for the playing fields and one cut of the Church graveyard grass, totalling £1,555.00, land drainage rates of £201.27, grounds maintenance and bus shelter cleaning at £282.00, the internal audit fee of £100.00 and the remainder made up of printing costs for the Village News, charges for room hire, staff wages, professional fees and general running costs.

c. To approve the renewal of the insurance policy with Clear Councils

It was resolved to renew the PC's insurance cover with Clear Councils and the Chair signed the renewal letter.

15. Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)**a. To formerly approve Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24**

LM proposed, SC seconded and all agreed.

Section 1 was duly signed by the Chair and the Clerk.

b. To formerly approve Section 2 – Accounting Statements of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24

RJ proposed, AC seconded and all agreed.

Section 2 was duly signed by the Chair.

16. Planning Matters**a. To receive the report of the Planning Committee.**

A report from the Chair of the Committee had been circulated prior to the meeting, showing 4 applications as undecided, as listed below.

H03-0896-24

Telephone Exchange Counter Drain Drove Demolition of buildings and erection of dwelling

PC Comments: No issues

H03-0415-25

16 Carrington Drive Hop Pole Proposed Extension & Alterations

PC Comments: Doubles size of house but can see no problems

H03-0427-25

1 Stonehouse Cottage Main Road Proposed Vehicular Access

PC Comments: No problems

H03-0048-25

Land off Littleworth Drove (near Campain's Lane) Rural exception site of affordable housing comprising 24 dwellings. Amendments made.

PC Comments: As discussed at meetings 22-7-24 & 27-1-25. See comments below.

1. It's in flood zone 3. In the July 2018 housing boundary map this area is firmly outside the red line, i.e. not available for building on.
2. A previous development for this area was turned down a few years ago on grounds of flooding and drainage, and also concerns about access.
3. The enclosed flood risk assessment states that for this level of risk, dwellings should be two storeys, yet it shows what appears to be four dwellings with ground floor bedrooms, contrary to planning policy of a flood risk area.

4. The dwellings on a higher level will cascade water onto the bungalows and other existing dwellings at a lower level. The Avenue is already prone to flooding which this will exacerbate.
5. Access would be onto a 40mph road within yards of where it changes to a 50mph road at that point - not ideal but maybe a separate issue.
6. Affordable housing - How will this be affordable? (Addressed in proposal)

Another application has been received since the report had been circulated: -

H03-0482-25

28a Coronation Avenue – small rear extension

PC Comments: No problems

b. To consider the EGL 3 & 4 proposals for 2 high voltage energy links from Scotland to England, with converter stations.

It was agreed that members would feed their thoughts back to the Clerk to be compiled into one response. 23rd June is the deadline.

17. To receive an update from the Playing Fields Committee.

RJ gave a brief verbal update and circulated a plan of the proposed MUGA for Littleworth. There will be 12 parking spaces, disabled access and a new covered bus shelter on a plinth, with a seat.

18. To receive reports and updates from members on Community groups and to resolve any requests.

GNS

- Relaunching 16th of June, after the fete
- Looking for more volunteers
- 1 week at RJ's home then at the Church

FOLS

Next meeting on the 17th of June

Village Fete

- 15 stalls
- Bar
- Dessert bar and fast food
- 2 local singers and a guitarist
- Help required to put up the party tent and help out on the day
- Meet your councillor stall

Neighbourhood Watch

- Cars smashing
- Drugs
- Attempted break-in
- PC Laura Richardson
- Please report all incidents to the Police

Gardening Club

- All planters are planted up for the Spring/Summer
- Pathway around the sensory garden will be underway after the fete

Parish Plan

- Well within budget
- Distributed in August/September to get the results back in time for the November meeting and Budget setting.

Emergency Planning

RJ stated that he had completed all the forms and sent them on but received no response since. It was agreed that RJ should send the feedback form to the Clerk to be forwarded on to the officer at LCC.

Tongue End

NM-C announced that the rewilding project of the field will be relaunched with a new committee.

ACTION: Clerk to chase Cllr Ingrid Sheard regarding the implementation of the new speed signs.

19. Agenda items for the next meeting.

There were none.

"In Committee"

The Public & Press to be excluded from the meeting in accordance with the provision of Section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (admission to meetings Act 1960). The items to be discussed being of a confidential nature.

10. To receive the HR Committee Report and resolve to approve any recommendations therein.

Social Media

- Remind Members that they are Parish Councillors at all times.
- To be mindful of what you post on your personal Social Media pages.
- Any posts regarding Council business must go via the Clerk.

WhatsApp

The group chat was setup by the Clerk, for quick and easy communication between members, but should not be used for venting frustrations.

Community Hero Awards

- Second year of doing this.
- Lessons learned:
 - More time and attention beforehand, with clear cut-off dates for submissions.
 - Nominees to be invited to attend, well ahead of the meeting and if they're unable to attend, to name someone who can collect their award on their behalf.
- PB added that Erica Crust was awarded her certificate in the Church by Liz Sneath, (former County Cllr for Tongue End), and it moved her to tears.

11. To resolve for the Council to adopt the following policies.

a. Zero Tolerance Policy

This Policy is to compliment the Grievance and Disciplinary Policy, with new guidance around mediation.

b. Deeping St Nicholas PC Standing Orders - updated 2025

LM moved that the two policies be adopted and RJ seconded.

It was resolved to adopt both policies and for them to be added to the PC's website.

8.20pm The Clerk was asked to leave the meeting ahead of the next item.

Clerks Appraisal process and pay recommendations

Members resolved to award the Clerk a Pay Scale increase.

This will be backdated to the beginning of September 2024 when her appraisal was due.