Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on Tuesday the 26th of May commencing at 7pm in Deeping St Nicholas Parish Church, Main Road, Deeping St Nicholas.

Present

Parish Council Members:	Deborah Croyle, Andy Croyle, James Mitchell, Anna Spencer, Nicholas Watts, Louise McGuinness, Sharon Hall and Suzanne Chappell
Clerk:	Mrs Harrison
County Councillor:	Raymond Condell
Members of the Public:	Paul Barrett, Trevor Jackson and another gentleman

Incumbent Chair: Deborah Croyle

Before the commencement of proceedings, the Chair spoke of the recent passing of Rob Jarvis who was the Vice Chairman of the Council. Rob was also Chairman of the Playing Fields Committee, founder of the DSN Good Neighbour Scheme and the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme.

Rob devoted his time on the Council to serve the people of the village, continually striving to make life better for everyone and he will be truly missed.

In his memory, the Council will be looking to place a commemorative bench in St Nicholas Park, which the Good Neighbour Scheme is prepared to donate towards, as are other individuals.

Members stood to observe a minute's silence in Rob's memory.

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

a. Chairman's Announcements

DC nominated Louise McGuinness, SH seconded and all were in favour.
Louise was duly elected as Chairman for the ensuing year and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

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

a. Vice Chairman's Announcements

DC nominated Anna Spencer, AC seconded and all were in favour.
Anna was duly elected as Vice Chairman for the ensuing year and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

Public Forum

Mr Barrett asked what progress was being made regarding the damaged Interactive Speed Sign in Hop Pole.

- Members advised that this would be covered in the Clerk's Report.

A gentleman raised an issue with the state of the road in Hop Pole, due to work carried out by Anglian Water. Repairs have been made but the road is much worse than before; joints haven't been filled in. The main issues are vibration and noise.

- Cllr Condell requested that it be reported again, on FixmyStreet then the report number be sent to him so that he can chase it up.

3. To receive and approve reasons for absence.

All members were present, but the Clerk had received apologies from District Cllrs Alcock and Astill.

4. To resolve membership of the following Committees: -

The following memberships were agreed: -

a. HR

A Croyle (Chair) and S Chappell. There is a vacancy for at least one other member.

b. Finance

L McGuinness (Chair), S Hall, A Spencer and N Watts.

c. Planning

A Croyle (Chair), N Watts and S Chappell.

d. Playing Fields

With no volunteers, it was resolved to move this onto the next meeting's Agenda.

e. Highways & Footpaths

N Watts (Chair), S Chappell, S Hall and A Spencer.

5. 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.

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

DC moved, AC seconded and all agreed that the Council Minutes and the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting in April, be signed as a true record.

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

There were none.

Nicholas Watts left the meeting.

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

<u>Civic.ly (Asset Management App)</u>

A report outlining this service had been distributed, along with a link to a short video on YouTube.

The cost of the subscription for DSN would be £19 per month which could be cancelled at any time.

Members resolved that as there are no members for the Playing Fields Committee at present, this be added to the next meeting's Agenda.

ACTION: Clerk

Valuation of Regalia

Members resolved that as there is no budget for this in the current year, the cost be included in the Budget for 2027/28.
ACTION: Finance Committee

Damaged Interactive Speed Sign

Trevor Jackson was invited to give the Council an update regarding the situation.

- The damaged sign had been sent back to ElanCity for repair, following instruction from the Council's Insurers. It was sent in the proper packaging, (as given to him from the RSP).
- On the 28th of April Trevor received the repaired sign, but upon opening the box, he could see it was damaged as the screen was not fixed inside the casing, and there was no pole mount bracket.
- He contacted ElanCity within 24hours of receipt and the unit was sent back on Wednesday the 20th of May.
- Trevor advised the Council that as soon as it's returned and fixed, he will be happy to install the sign onto the new pole.

Members thanked Trevor for his time, help and assistance with this matter.

Members questioned whether the original pole could be removed, and discussed various options for removal.

Cllr Condell agreed to find out whether the PC is able to remove the pole or whether it will need to be done by Highways.
ACTION: Cllr Condell

Community Speed Watch (CSW)

The local co-ordinator, Paul Barrett was asked whether he had a report for the Council.

Mr Barrett advised that he had not been out at all as he was short of members for his team, although his wife is now undertaking training, so she will be able to go out with him along with the one other member. He added that although there are a lot of people trained in the village, none of them would go out with him.

SC stated that she has another member for Hop Pole, and is currently awaiting approval from the owner/occupier of the Blue Bell Inn, for them to use the frontage to their property to operate from. Unfortunately, she has had no joy in making contact with them, so the Clerk has written to them.

Mr Barrett added that he would be happy to go and help Suzanne in Hop Pole.

Correspondence

- Email request for funding from Deeping Rangers FC

It was resolved that as the club are not in Deeping St Nicholas, they fall outside the scope of the PC's Grants Policy.
ACTION: Clerk to reply

- Tracked letter from Meridian passed to the Chair of the Planning Committee.

9. HR Committee: to approve the Committee's Terms of Reference and Risk Register.

AC proposed, AS seconded and all agreed.

10. To review the Council's Policies and Procedures and to approve any updates: Summary of Policies attached

AC outlined the following changes from the list: -

- Paternity Leave and Pay Policy: Major updates to reflect the 2026 changes that this is now a 'day one' entitlement, and to add in the new statutory bereavement leave entitlement.
- Safeguarding Policy: Minor update to emphasise the arrangements in the absence of a safeguarding officer.
- Sickness Policy: Major updates to reflect the 2026 changes that this is now a 'day one' entitlement, and to remove the lower earnings limit.
- Grants Policy: Minor update to reflect the changes in the current arrangements for annual grants.

AC proposed that the changes were approved en bloc, SC seconded and all agreed. Policies will be reviewed in a year's time, or beforehand if necessary.
ACTION: AC to send to Clerk for Website.

11. Community Speed Watch.
Covered under Clerk's Report.

12. Finance Matters

a. To receive the Bank Reconciliations for March and April
Received and signed by the Chair.

b. To receive the Summary/Budget Report
Received with thanks.

c. To approve Invoices for Payment (separate sheet)

AC queried an entry for £206.25 which was described as Bank Charges. The Clerk apologised for the inputting error and clarified that it was actually the Annual Drainage Rates for land in Tongue End.

JM moved, SH seconded and it was resolved to approve payments of £5,258.73 Net.

13. To approve the renewal of the Council's insurance policy.

DC moved, JM seconded and it was resolved to renew the Insurance Policy with Clear Councils.

14. Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for 2025/26:

a. **To formerly approve Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement** of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/26

JM moved, AC seconded and it was resolved to formally approve Section 1 of the AGAR. The Chair and the Clerk both signed the document.

b. **To formerly approve Section 2 – Accounting Statements** of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/26

DC moved, SC seconded and it was resolved to formally approve Section 2 of the AGAR. The Chair signed the document which the Clerk had already signed on the 20th of May.

15. Planning Matters:

a. **To receive the report of the Planning Committee and to agree the Council's response to applications under consultation**

The report had been circulated prior to the meeting.
AC advised that;

- the application for 2x V signs by Station Yard has been approved and they are now in place,
- the erection of 2x holiday lodges adjacent to Poplar Farm Kennels have been refused,
- the anaerobic digestion plant at Grange Farm, Tongue End, (resurrection of application H03-0410-16 from 10 years ago), is being dealt with by LCC.
- AC added that the Home Farm development appears to have been approved, although not showing on the SHDC planning portal. The Village Hall will be constructed after 25% of the houses have been built.
- Emerald Homes have requested, (via email last Friday), details regarding flooring, colours, treatments, etc. Hard copies of the plans were delivered to the Church, prior to tonight's meeting, but the Hall Committee will need time to study them in detail before arranging a meeting with EH to discuss.

16. Village Hall CIO: To resolve in principle to either accept the assets of the CIO or to become a trustee of the Village Hall CIO, depending on the outcome of a CIO committee meeting.

AC explained that there are currently 6 trustees, 3 of whom will cease once the hall is built. The Church and the School (PTA/PCC) could potentially, become trustees with the PC and form a Management Committee.

- The Parish Council will own the hall and the ringfenced funds in the NatWest bank account are to be used to keep the hall running in its first few years. The funds are not to be used for furnishings, etc.

- The PC/Management Committee, may decide to employ someone on a part-time basis, to manage the bookings.

AC moved that the PC, in principle, becomes a Trustee of the Village Hall, SH seconded and all agreed.

17. Good Neighbour Scheme: to resolve in principle to accept the assets of the GNS, should the GNS Committee decide to cease operations.

AC advised members that the GNS is now down to 2 volunteers and 2 users, (one of whom is moving away).

- The volunteers don't live locally
- Assets to be transferred to the CIO Village Hall
- Mick White will take over the maintenance of the defibrillator
- Marquee, chairs and tables will be stored for the use of the PC
- There will be no funding award to the GNS this year and no village fete

18. To receive the latest online Police Report.

There were 6 crimes reported in March this year, as published on the Police website.

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

<u>Gardening Club</u>

DC gave the following update: -

- Spring and summer bedding plants have been put into all 24 planters around the village and along the Main Road.
- Will not be entering the 'in Bloom' competition this year.

<u>FOLS</u>

LM advised that a meeting has been arranged for Friday the 12th of June, so there will be an update at the next Council meeting.

20. Agenda items for the next meeting; set for the 27th of July in the Church.

- Community Speed Watch
- Playing Fields Committee
  - Membership
  - MUGA
- S106 Monies (AS)
- Update on VH Committee (AC)
- Update on the road at Hop Pole (SC)

Before the Chair closed the meeting, Members were reminded that this was Deborah Croyle's last meeting, as outlined in her resignation email received on the 28th of March.

James Mitchell handed a letter to the Chair and asked that it be read out to everyone and included in the Mintes. The letter read as follows.

Please accept this letter as my immediate resignation from the council. I find the calling of an election, that will be a considerable financial burden to the people of the parish, distasteful at best. The fact that this election has been called is a malicious act by a few individuals who have belittled all that has been achieved within the past couple of years by council members volunteering their time and considerable effort. This has been deemed by these individuals as not for the betterment of the parish.

I wish the very best to the remaining council members and hope this financial burden does not cause the collapse of the council.

Regards

Jim Mitchell

Please Note

I'm still in possession of one picnic bench and the exercise equipment. I'm happy to carry on storing these items or they can be delivered to someone else.

I'm happy to deliver these items back when installation has been decided. I will no longer be offering my services to assist with installation.

Members thanked both Deborah and James for their time and commitment to the Parish during their time on the Council and wished them all the best in their future endeavours.

Meeting closed at 20:25