Holbeach PARISH COUNCIL

Coubro Chambers, 11 West End
Holbeach, PE12 7LW
01406 426739
parishoffice@holbeachpc.com
holbeach.parish.lincolnshire.gov.uk
@HolbeachParishCouncil

Minutes of the meeting of Holbeach Parish Council on 13th April 2026 at 18:30 at the Holbeach Methodist Church, Holbeach

Present:

Councillors: Cllr Adrian Haslett, Cllr Isobel Hutchinson, Cllr Peter Howden, Cllr Eddie McNally, Cllr Sophie Hutchinson, Cllr Paul Foyster, Cllr Tim Wiltshire

*Open meeting opened at: **18:30***

The Chair welcomed all present and reminded attendees of recording arrangements in accordance with the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. Members were reminded of their responsibilities under the Code of Conduct and the Seven Principles of Public Life.

1 - Apologies for absence
No apologies were received.

2 - Declarations of interest.
No declarations of interest were received.

3 - Public Forum
A member of the public raised two matters:

- **Electrical Testing Quotes**
  Members were advised that a quote from JBK Electrical (£240 per property) had reportedly been accepted at a PPES Committee meeting in October 2024, but the Full Council later approved testing at approximately £380 per property. Cllr I. Hutchinson stated she had not seen the JBK quote at the time of presenting information in January. Members noted that clarification would be provided following the meeting.
- **Filming of a Member of the Public**
  A resident queried why footage of a member of the public appeared on YouTube despite the individual not wishing to be filmed. Members noted the concern and confirmed the matter would be reviewed.

No further questions were raised.

4 - Reports from Elected Members
No reports were received from South Holland District Council or Lincolnshire County Council.

Members discussed several agenda items where either:
- no information had been provided,
- the matter had already been completed, or
- the item was no longer required.

It was proposed, seconded and
Resolved:

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To remove the following items from the agenda due to insufficient information, duplication of previous decisions, or because the matters had already been completed:
8A Bass Allotments; 8D Tractor Shed; 8G Notes of Open Spaces Meeting; 9B Changing Places Pod Repairs; 9C Carter's Park Path Quotes; 9D SIDs; 9E Park Bungalow; 9F Planning Matters; 10B SHDC May Half-Term Event.

Members noted that several items contained commercially sensitive information or staffing matters and therefore required discussion in closed session.

It was proposed, seconded and
Resolved:
To move the following items into closed session due to the commercially sensitive or confidential staffing nature of the business:
8E Fencing Quotes (Fishpond Lane & Nature Reserve); 11A HR Advisor Service Quotes; 7A Extension of LGRC Contract; 7B Appointment of Acting RFO & Proper Officer.

5 – Minutes
Members discussed the minutes listed on the agenda and noted that several contained inaccuracies or missing resolutions. Members were advised that some minutes had only been received shortly before the meeting.

Resolved:
To defer approval of all minutes listed under Item 5 (8 December 2025; 19 January 2026; 26 January 2026; 2 April 2026) to the next meeting.

6. Finance & Admin Committee

a) Bank Balances
Members received the bank balances as at 31 March 2026:
- CCLA Fund: £349,656
- Barclays Business Premium Account: £29,069.48
- Barclays Current Account: £3,213.03

Resolved: To approve the bank balances as presented.

b) Payments List
Members were advised that delegated powers had been used for payments during months without meetings, but inaccuracies had been identified. Members noted that approving the list would require all items to be paid exactly as written, which posed risks.

Resolved:
Not to approve the payments list. Only contractual payments are to be authorised by the Clerk this week under delegated powers.

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c) Income Lists
Members noted the income lists but did not approve them pending correction of related financial records.

d) Gov.uk Domain
Members noted that the domain purchase had already been completed.

8 - Open Spaces Committee

c) Amended Asset Register
Members noted the updated asset register and discussed the need to dispose of obsolete items of value.

Resolved:
To approve the amended asset register and refer disposal considerations to the Open Spaces Committee.

f) Strawberry Fields Land Proposal
Members discussed the history of the land, noting it had previously been offered to SHDC, the church, and LCC, all of whom declined. Members noted the land was not required by the Council.

Resolved:
To confirm that the Council does not wish to pursue acquisition of the Strawberry Fields land.

10 - Events & PR Committee

a) Election of Members
Members discussed whether appointments were necessary given that committees would be reconstituted in May.

Resolved: Not to appoint additional members at this meeting.

c) Fundraising Event – Bounce House
Members were advised that paperwork had been received shortly before the meeting.

Resolved:
To approve the event subject to the Clerk reviewing and confirming that all required documentation (insurance, risk assessments) is satisfactory.

12 - Agenda Items for Next Meeting
No items were submitted.

13 - Date of Next Meeting
Members noted the next meeting date: **11 May 2026.**

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14 - Exclusion of Press & Public
Resolved:
To agree to exclude the press and public under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meeting) Act 1960 due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted. Publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest for reasons including the consideration of sensitive staffing matters, legal advice, and personal information, as defined under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Open meeting closed at 19:02

Closed meeting opened at 19:04

7 - Appointment of Officers

a) Extension of LGRC Contract
Members were advised that the Council must have a Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) in place at all times, and that the current LGRC Acting Clerk/RFO contract was due to end on 10 April 2026. Members noted that recruitment was ongoing and continuity was required to ensure lawful operation of the Council.

Members discussed the available options, including temporary extension of the existing contract and interim internal arrangements. Members noted that the Acting Clerk had confirmed willingness to extend the contract for a short period.

Resolved: To suspend standing orders to revisit Item 7A.

Resolved:
That the current arrangement for the acting clerk, acting responsible financial officer, and acting proper officer, be extended for a period of one week till the 17th and that a new contract with the LGRC be approved for the provision of an acting proper officer/meeting clerk, and acting responsible for financial officer thereafter.

Standing orders reinstated.

b) Appointment of Acting RFO & Proper Officer
Members were advised that, despite the one-week extension, the Council must have contingency arrangements in place from close of play Friday in case further extension was not possible or recruitment was delayed.
Members discussed the statutory requirement for the Council to designate named individuals to fulfil the roles of Proper Officer and RFO.

Members noted that the Council could not operate lawfully without an RFO in place.

Resolved:
To appoint Cllr Eddie McNally as Acting RFO, for statutory responsibilities only, until the next Council meeting.

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Members then discussed the implications of this decision and noted:

- The Council would also require an Acting Proper Officer from close of play Friday.
- The Council cannot legally have two RFOs at the same time, meaning the earlier resolution required amendment.
- The agenda item needed to be revisited to ensure both statutory roles were covered.

Suspension of Standing Orders
Resolved: To suspend standing orders to revisit Item 7B.

Amendment of Agenda Item
Members agreed to amend Item 7B to allow reconsideration of the appointments required from close of play Friday and to include appointment of an Acting Propper Officer.

It was proposed, seconded and resolved:

1. **To appoint Cllr Adrian Haslett as Acting Proper Officer, solely to satisfy statutory requirements, from close of play Friday until the next Council meeting.**
2. **To appoint Cllr Eddie McNally as Acting RFO, solely to satisfy statutory requirements, from close of play Friday until the next Council meeting.**

Standing orders were reinstated.

8e) Fencing Quotes (Fishpond Lane Nature Reserve)
Members noted that the agenda wording stated "consideration" and did not allow for a resolution.

It was proposed, seconded and resolved: To amend Item 8E from 'consideration' to 'resolution'.

Members reviewed three quotes for replacement fencing and gates at the Nature Reserve. Members were advised that although all contractors quoted for the same specification, the level of vegetation clearance included varied:

- **Arkie Fencing** – £9,100 incl. VAT; includes full vegetation and tree clearance.
- **MBS Fencing** – £6,560 + VAT; requires Council staff to cut back overgrowth.
- **Canadian Fencing** – £6,356 + VAT; minimal trimming included, majority of clearance expected to be done by Council staff.

Members discussed the workload implications for the Grounds Team, noting current reduced staffing and the significant clearance required. Members also noted safety considerations due to the site's location next to a footpath and road bend.

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To accept Quote 1 from Arkie Fencing (£9,100 including VAT), including full vegetation clearance, for the fencing works at Fishpond Lane and the Nature Reserve.

11A – HR Advisor Service Quotes

Members considered the HR Advisor comparison report, noting that the quotes were commercially sensitive. Members discussed the Council's need for combined HR and Health & Safety support, particularly during ongoing staffing and governance work.

Members reviewed the options presented and noted the benefits of a single provider offering both HR and H&S services under one contract.

Resolved:
To appoint WorkNest to provide combined HR and Health & Safety services at a cost of £3,325 per annum under a 60-month agreement with a 36 month break clause.

Members further agreed that initial contact and onboarding with WorkNest should be coordinated by:

- **Cllr Adrian Haslett**, and
- **Cllr Sophie Hutchinson**

Resolved: That Cllr Haslett and Cllr S Hutchinson will act as the Council's initial points of contact for WorkNest during setup

15. HR, H&S & Data Protection Committee

A) Update on Staff Matters

Members received a general update.

B) Job Re-evaluation – Grounds Supervisor

Members were advised that under the NJC Green Book job evaluation framework, a post may be re-evaluated six months after creation or where duties have demonstrably changed. Members noted that the Grounds Supervisor post had been created more than six months ago and therefore met the criteria for re-evaluation.

Members were further advised that the Council's previous HR advisor had begun the process but it had not been completed.

Resolved:
That the Grounds Supervisor role be formally re-evaluated under NJC Green Book terms, and that Cllr Peter Howden and Cllr Eddie McNally complete the evaluation.

C) Job Re-evaluation – Archives & Admin Assistant

Members were advised that the Archives & Admin Assistant post did not meet NJC Green Book criteria for re-evaluation, as:

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- The post had not reached six months since creation, and
- No material change in duties had occurred.

Members discussed the matter and agreed that a re-evaluation could not be justified at this time.

Resolved: That the Archives & Admin Assistant role is not eligible for re-evaluation under NJC Green Book terms, and no further action be taken.

D) Confidential Damage Report
Members discussed the matter. **No resolution recorded.**

E) Leases
Members were advised that the Council's commercial leases had expired earlier in the year, resulting in sitting tenants. Members noted that updated leases had been professionally reviewed by the Council's solicitor to ensure legal compliance and continuity.

Members reviewed the draft leases for the three Council-owned commercial properties. Members were advised that all leases followed the same structure: a **three-year term**, **rent review after one year**, and a **break clause at the first anniversary**, allowing either party to terminate the lease with three months' notice.

Resolved:
To approve the commercial leases for the Top Floor at Coubro Chambers, 2 High Street, and 4 High Street, noting that each lease is for a three-year term with a rent review after one year and includes a break clause at the first anniversary allowing termination with three months' notice, and that the annual rents are as follows:

- **Top Floor, Coubro Chambers:** £5,400 per annum
- **2 High Street:** £4,000 per annum
- **4 High Street:** £3,240 per annum

Meeting closed at 21:19

Signed Chair ……………………………………………………………. Date …………………….