



North Hykeham Town Council

Minutes of the Finance and Policy Committee meeting 08/24
held on Thursday 24th April 2025 at 7pm

Councillors Present: N Blanchard (Chair), C Briggs, J Holt, R Johnston, G Killingsworth, FW Lee, M Lofts, C Nnamdi, SP Roe, K Sampson

In Attendance: Mrs M Parker – Town Clerk
Cllr A Marshall

- 8-24.1 Apologies for absence and acceptance of reasons given to the Clerk in advance of the meeting**
Cllr Marshall was welcomed to the meeting, as he was not currently an appointed committee member. It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Marshall join the meeting and be afforded voting rights at this meeting.

As all committee Members were in attendance, there were no Apologies to be received.

- 8.24.2 Receipt of any Declaration of Members' Interests under the Localism Act 2011**
No Declarations of Interest were made.

- 8-24.3 Notes of the Finance & Policy Committee meeting held on 20th February 2025 be approved as Minutes**
It was **RESOLVED** to accept the Notes of the Finance and Policy Committee meeting held on 20th February 2025 as a true record of the meeting and were signed as the Minutes accordingly.

- 8-24.4 Chair's Items**
Cllr Blanchard confirmed that he and several members of the F&P committee had met with the Internal Auditor in March during her visit to carry out the Year End Audit, and that she had provided them with a very informative training session with detailed insight into the council's finances. The Internal Auditor had detailed the changes that would be made over the coming year, including the new Chart of Accounts and continued review of Earmarked Reserves.

- 8-24.5 Correspondence and Clerk's Items**
The Clerk had no items of correspondence to present. Updates from the last meeting were noted by Members as:

| Item No: | Action | Updates |
|----------|--|--|
| 7-24.7 | Accept the quotation for Total Energies, for Gas provision to the Civic Offices, with an annual cost of £5941.78, to run until September 2026 | Completed. Account opened 1 st Apr 2025 |
| 7-24.8 | Continue to undertake actions on the informed findings of the Interim Internal Report, prioritising those which are necessary actions above those that are best practice recommendations. | Ongoing |
| 7-24.9 | Recommendation to Town Council to open a PSDF account with CCLA, and that monies be transferred into that account, with £250k being retained in a current bank account to meet the council's operational expenditure | Completed 13 th March 2025. New Account application is in progress. |

| | | |
|---------|---|---|
| 7-24.10 | Burial fees for all full (coffin) burials be removed immediately and all other fees remain the same – to be published. | Completed by end of Feb 2025 |
| 7-24.12 | The draft Community Grants policy be presented to the Town Council for consideration to adopt. | Completed 13 th March 2025 |
| 7-24.13 | The draft GDPR Policy, GDPR Data Protection Impact Assessment, and the GDPR – Remote working Policy be presented to the Town Council for consideration to adopt | Completed 13 th March 2025 |
| 7-24.14 | The draft Statement of Internal Controls be presented to the Town Council for consideration to adopt | Completed 13 th March 2025 |
| 7-24.15 | Amend Exclusive Rights of Burial Refund Policy | Completed end of February 2025 |
| 7-24.18 | Clerks to continue with the in-house processing of payroll, to be reviewed in 6 months' time. | Ongoing |
| 7-24.19 | Inform applicant that the request for an increased refund in relation to an Exclusive Rights of Burial was rejected. | Applicant written to with outcome of request. |

8-24.6 Financial Matters:

- a) **Approval of schedule of payments** (appendix 1 to these minutes): Members were presented with a Schedule of Payments 1st to 31st March 2025, to a Net Value of £60,817.60, to review and consider recommending to Town Council for approval.

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend that Town Council approves expenditure of £60,817.60 to meet the demands listed on the Schedule of Payments to 1st to 31st March 2025.

- b) **formally resolve upon the allocation of £3000 from General Reserves to cover additional costs for the management of the cemetery as agreed by the use of Standing Order 26 (Emergency Powers)**: Cllrs Blanchard, Briggs and Lofts had used Standing Order 26 to give approval for £3k to be allocated to the appointment of a consultancy to provide a report on the current land conditions at North Hykeham cemetery.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the transfer of £3000 from General Reserves to Earmarked Reserve 323 (Cemetery) to cover the costs of consultancy reports on land conditions at North Hykeham Cemetery

- c) **Review of Earmarked Reserves (EMRs)** (appendix 2 to these minutes): Members reviewed the list of Earmarked Reserves (as at 31st March 2025) and were satisfied that the list suitably represented the operational needs of the council.

8-24.7 Receive the end of year Internal Audit report for 2024-25 and consider any findings and recommendations

Members received the 2024-25 Yr End Internal Audit report and discussed the findings. It was noted that the Internal Auditor was very pleased to see that almost all of the recommendations from the interim Internal Report had already been acted upon already. It was confirmed that the one remaining matter which needed action was with regards to the council viewing budgets against actual spend on a quarterly basis; this would now be undertaken by F&P moving forward. Members were very pleased to see that the overall rating for the audit was given as Substantial Assurance.

8-24.8 Preparation of the council's Annual Governance Accounting Return (AGAR) for the financial year 2024-25

The Clerk had prepared the 2024-25 AGAR, which Members discussed and validate the content. It was noted that the Annual Internal Audit Report (AIAR) had been completed by the council's Internal Auditor. Members were satisfied that the council would be able to consider and accept the presented AGAR.

It was **RESOLVED** that the presented 2024-25 AGAR be put to the next meeting of the town council to consider approval and onward transmission to the External Auditor.

8-24.9 Review of the following items, in preparation of the council's Annual General Meeting (8th May 2025)

Members discussed the following documents:

- Standing Orders: Standing Orders be adjusted to reflect the legislative changes made to the Financial Regulations
- Financial Regulations: Legislative changes regarding the new Procurement Act be made to the Financial Regulations.
- Code of Conduct: Members agreed no changes were required
- Council's Direct Debits and regular payments register: Noted

It was **RESOLVED** that the reviewed and changed Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, along with the unchanged Code of Conduct and reviewed list of the Council's Direct Debits and regular payments be presented at the Annual General Meeting of the Town Council to consider for approval.

8-24.10 Review of Allotment Fees for Jan-Dec 2026

Members reviewed the 2025 allotment fees and considered what, if any, increase would be necessary for the upkeep of the allotments.

It was **RESOLVED** that all fees would be increased by 5% (rounded up to the nearest £) for January to December 2026.

8-24.11 Review of the town council's 2024/2025 Fixed Asset Register and Tools Asset Register, including the formal approval of additions and deductions during the financial year

Members reviewed the Fixed Asset and Tools Registers for 2024/2025, including the list of added and disposed items for the year.

It was **RESOLVED** that to approve the presented additions and disposals made during 2024/2025, as recorded on the respective 2024/25 registers.

8-24.12 To consider a proposal that the Finance and Policy Committee suspends Standing Orders (for this agenda item only) to reconsider the Exclusive Rights of Burial refund policy - Cllr SP Roe

It was **RESOLVED** that the Council's Standing Orders be suspended to allow for this item to be discussed.

Cllr Roe presented 3 options to amend the Exclusive Rights of Burial refund policy, with a 4th option to change nothing from the current policy, which were discussed by Members. Cllr Roe presented options regarding refunds payable to those deed holders who had not had any form of burial in their allotted plot. He detailed the 3 options for change and Members agreed that the only option that they should like to discuss was whether to make a full refund to those deed holders who had not, as the other options did not make any significant change to the current

policy. Some Members stated that a full refund did not take into account the costs the council had incurred by maintaining those plots since they had been purchased, however others stated that plot holders felt there was a negative will to review any issues from the council and so wished to explore the overall effects this change may have. Members discussed the option, being clear that this was a consideration of a full refund to only those deed holders who had not yet requested a burial in the cemetery, and that the refund policy with regards to those who had a double plot and had one burial within that plot was not being considered to be changed.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Exclusive Rights of Burials policy would have all reference maintenance and upkeep costs removed and the policy be amended to read as follows:

Refund Calculations

Refunds will be calculated using the following formulas, adjusted for single or double plot ownership as applicable. Refunds will be calculated based on the original purchase price only, with no adjustments for inflation.

- a. Single Plot Purchasers, where no burial has taken place
 - i. Refund Amount = Original Purchase Price of Single plot.
- b. Double Plot Purchasers
 - i. If a single interment has already taken place:
Refund Amount = Difference between cost of Double and Single Burial at the time of original purchase.
 - ii. If no interments have taken place:
Refund Amount = Original Purchase Price of Double Plot.

It was further **RESOLVED** that the Clerk would review all refunds which had been paid using the current policy's calculations and take the necessary action to use the amended policy's calculations to make any further payments to comply with the new policy.

It was further **RESOLVED** that the policy would be returned to the F&P committee for review in 6 months' time.

It was **RESOLVED** to re-instate Standing Orders to allow the meeting to continue.

8-24.13 Review of the following policies: Health & Safety, Expenses and Allowances Policy, Flexible Working Policy, Events Policy

Members discussed the following proposed/reviewed policies as:

- Health and Safety Policy – no changes proposed
- Expenses and Allowances Policy – no changes proposed
- Flexible Working Policy (as reviewed by the Personnel sub-committee) – to remove any reference to pre April 2024 legislation – supported by F&P Committee Members
- Events Policy (as reviewed by the Community and Planning committee) – changes to reflect the title of Community and Planning committee and to clarify the refunds payable to entertainers and traders – supported by F&P Committee Members

It was **RESOLVED** that the Health and Safety Policy and Expenses and Allowances Policies be presented to the Town Council, unchanged, for consideration to adopt.

It was further **RESOLVED** that the proposed changes to the Flexible Working Policy and the Events Policy be accepted and presented to the Town Council for consideration to adopt.

- 8-24.14 Development of additional GDPR documentation – consideration to create the following: Data Management protocol, IT security Policy, IT acceptable use policy, and an Audit data policy**
Members were reminded that these policies had been recommended in the Internal Auditor’s report but as yet had not been compiled. Members discussed whether to continue to have any/all of these policies drafted.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk prepares draft policies for the F&P committee to consider and develop further.

- 8-24.15 Consider the new draft Neonatal Care Leave Policy, as prepared by the Personnel sub-committee**

Cllr Blanchard informed the meeting that new legislation regarding Neonatal Care Leave had come into force and that the council needed to have a suitable policy in place. The Personnel sub-committee presented a policy for Members to consider.

It was **RESOLVED** that the draft Neonatal Care Leave policy be presented to the Town Council for consideration to adopt.

- 8-24.16 Development of the committee’s 5-year plan**

As there were no new matters to be presented for the 5-year plan, it was agreed to move to the next agenda item.

- 8-24.17 To consider whether the Sub-Committee will move into Closed Session in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 for the following confidential agenda items:**

It was **RESOLVED** that the committee moved into Closed Session to discuss the following confidential agenda items.

- 8-24.18 Consideration of quotations for the subscription to access the Asset register and Purchase Order modules of the council’s current accounting software, as recommended by the Internal Auditor.**

The Clerk summarised the workings of the Asset Register module which was offered by the council’s accounts software provider. She advised that the module did not interact with the accounts package in a way which would reduce risk of human error with regards to remember to enter newly purchased items onto the appropriate Asset Register, but that it was hoped this may become possible in the future. The design of the current module was very similar to the current Excel spreadsheets used by the council to record assets; the Clerk advised that there would be no simple way to have the Excel data transferred to the new module, which would therefore require a significant period of time for a clerk to transfer the data. Members felt that at this time the Assets Register module was not viewed to meet the needs of the council any better than the current system in place.

It was **RESOLVED** that this recommendation from the Internal Audit report be recorded as having been considered but that the council would not be purchasing the Asset Register module at this time.

The Clerk summarised the workings of the Purchase Order module, and detailed how it would interact well with the current accounts software and reduce clerks’ time by streamlining the raising and completing of Purchase Orders.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk obtains a quote for the Purchase Order module in time for the next F&P committee meeting to consider.

8-24.19 Consideration to place town councillors' email accounts onto personal devices, using a dedicated IT process

Members considered whether to purchase a Managed IT service to securely upload councillors' town council emails onto personal mobile phones. Some Members had experience of having work and personal emails on the same personal phone, others felt that having this facility would have a detrimental effect on their work/life balance. A quote was discussed and the Clerk was asked to discuss issues raised by Members and obtain further information and a revised quotation, and that this information should be raised at a Town Council meeting for all councillors to discuss.

8-24.20 Consideration of a request for compensation in relation to changes in the acceptance of full (coffin) burials in North Hykeham Cemetery

Members discussed a request for compensation from a family who had not been able to have a full (coffin) burial for a family member in a pre-purchased plot in North Hykeham Cemetery in January 2025 and instead had proceeded with a burial of ashes in said plot.

It was **RESOLVED** that the conditions of the Exclusive Rights of Burial refund policy had been fulfilled, and as the council has no compensation policy in place the request was refused.

8-24.21 Personnel Matters: to receive updates and consider ratification of recommendations from the Personnel Sub Committee.

CLlr Blanchard summarised the latest Personnel sub-committee meeting, which included reviewing and developing policies (discussed earlier in this meeting), reviewing staffing absence statistics for Oct-Dec 2024 and Jan-Mar 2025, and confirming the new Job Description for the Services Team Administrator role.

8-24.22 Consideration of requests to purchase a new full-size plot for the interment of ashes instead of a standard double ashes plot.

This item had been brought to the F&P committee by the Estates and Operations committee. Members were reminded that there was nothing within the current policy or pricing which allowed for full size burial plots to be purchased for only cremated remains to be buried.

It was **RESOLVED** that this be considered by the Cemetery Working Group as a future option for the North Hykeham Cemetery and until such time the current policy should be adhered to, and therefore any current or future requests that were not covered by the Exclusive Rights Burial Policy would have to be refused.

8.50pm - It was **RESOLVED** to extend the meeting to 9.05pm to allow for the last item to be dealt with.

8-24.23 Consideration of an enquiry for a memorial rose

Members were advised that the current memorial rose garden was full, and plants within it were struggling because of the shaded aspects now afforded by the surrounding maturing trees. There are currently no other dedicated alternative places within the Cemetery for floral memorials to be planted.

It was **RESOLVED** that this would be a matter for long-term development of the North Hykeham Cemetery and should be passed to the Cemetery Working Group for their further considerations, and therefore any current or future requests for such memorials would have to be refused.

The meeting closed at 8.59 pm.

Actions from this meeting:

| Item No: | Action | Allocated to | Complete by |
|-----------|--|-----------------|---|
| 8-24.6(b) | Transfer £3k to Cemetery EMR | Town Clerk | As soon as possible |
| 8-24.8 | Present drafted 2024-25 AGAR to Town Council | Town Council | Next Town Council meeting |
| 8-24.9 | Recommendation to Town Council to adopt presented Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, and Code of Conduct. | Town Council | Town Council's AGM 8 th May 2025 |
| 8-24.10 | Allotment fees would be increased by 5% (rounded up to the nearest £) for January to December 2026. | Assistant Clerk | 8 th May 2025 |
| 8-24.12 | Amend the Exclusive Rights of Burial refund policy and write to all those affected by the change | Town Clerk | As soon as possible |
| 8-24.13 | The following policies be sent to Town Council to consider adoption: Health & Safety, Expenses and Allowances Policy, Flexible Working Policy, Events Policy | Town Council | 8 th May 2025 |
| 8-24.15 | New Neonatal Leave policy be sent to Town Council to consider adoption. | Town Council | 8 th May 2025 |
| 8-24.20 | Write to inform applicant that no compensation will be given as EroB has been fulfilled. | Town Clerk | As soon as possible |

Appendix 1 – Schedule of payments to 1-31st March 2025

North Hykeham Town Council 2024/2025

Schedule of Payments 01-31 March 2025

| Date Paid | Payee Name | Amount Paid | Transaction Detail |
|------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 02/03/2025 | Asda | £31.19 | Office consumables |
| 02/03/2025 | ADOBE Systems Software Ireland | £16.64 | Acrobat Pro 28/2-27/3/25 |
| 03/03/2025 | Anglian Water Business | £9.00 | Cemetery Water Mar25 |
| 07/03/2025 | PHS Group | £101.86 | Sanitary disp. 12/3/25-11/6/25 |
| 07/03/2025 | Public Work Loan Board | £11,136.01 | PWLB repayment to 7/3/25 |
| 07/03/2025 | Paper Kisses | £2.49 | 100th Birthday card |
| 10/03/2025 | Asda | £12.70 | Consumables - cleaning materials |
| 10/03/2025 | Asda | £47.45 | Cleaning materials |
| 10/03/2025 | Peninsula | £21.83 | EAP services Mar25 |
| 10/03/2025 | Peninsula | £478.62 | HR subs Mar25 |
| 10/03/2025 | UK Fuels Limited | £67.32 | Fuel AJ24 FYA |
| 11/03/2025 | Easyspace Ltd | £12.23 | Domain name renewal |
| 11/03/2025 | Root Studio | £276.00 | CMS training x 2 |
| 11/03/2025 | Kram Cleaning | £1,155.70 | Office Cleaning Feb25 |
| 11/03/2025 | MEC Recycling Ltd | £25.00 | Green waste disposal 130225 |
| 11/03/2025 | Pennells Garden Centre | £26.91 | HIB Plants |
| 11/03/2025 | Huws Gray BuildBase | £416.88 | Timbers |
| 11/03/2025 | Working the Greener Way | £1,050.00 | Rialtas Omega training sessions x 5 |
| 11/03/2025 | E.ON Energy Solutions Limited | £711.00 | S/light maintenance to 310325 |
| 11/03/2025 | GLL | £3.06 | Library copier 1.8.24-31.1.25 |
| 11/03/2025 | Air IT Limited | £545.76 | Service Agreement -Mar25 |
| 11/03/2025 | ESE Direct Ltd | £58.68 | Ridged Jaw litter picker |
| 11/03/2025 | Flowers By Suzanne | £50.00 | 100th birthday presentation |
| 11/03/2025 | Listers Timber & Builders Merc | £1,404.00 | 18mm Birch plywood x 10 |
| 12/03/2025 | Vodafone Ltd | £251.85 | Mobile phones Feb25 |
| 13/03/2025 | PHS Group | £106.55 | Sanitary disp. Hub 18/3-17/6 |
| 14/03/2025 | British Telecommunications | £638.84 | Internet/phones 1-28 Feb25 |
| 16/03/2025 | Santander UK PLC | £1.40 | Bank Charges 1-28 Feb25 |
| 16/03/2025 | Santander UK PLC | £34.63 | Bank Charges 1-28 Feb25 |
| 17/03/2025 | Apogee Corporation Ltd | £242.75 | Copier rent and printing |
| 18/03/2025 | Canva UK Operations Ltd | £13.00 | Canva monthly subs Mar25 |
| 18/03/2025 | Mobilize Financial Services | £215.20 | Kangoo lease 18/3-17/4/25 |
| 19/03/2025 | British Gas Lite | £432.49 | Civic Off. gas 2/2-1/3/25 |
| 21/03/2025 | TotalEnergies Gas & Power Ltd | £146.66 | VG elec 1-28Feb25 |
| 21/03/2025 | TotalEnergies Gas & Power Ltd | £890.33 | Civ Off Elec 1-28 Feb25 |
| 21/03/2025 | TotalEnergies Gas & Power Ltd | £897.46 | Hub elec 1-28Feb25 |
| 24/03/2025 | HMRC | £7,408.26 | PAYE/NI Mar25 |
| 24/03/2025 | Nest Pensions | £2,348.23 | Pensions Mar25 |
| 24/03/2025 | Salaries | £17,362.11 | Salaries Mar25 |
| 24/03/2025 | LCC Pension Fund | £682.23 | WYPF Mar25 |
| 27/03/2025 | TotalEnergies Gas & Power Ltd | £202.51 | Hub Gas 31/1-28/2/25 |
| 28/03/2025 | Lincs Coop Hykeham Green | £3.30 | Office consumables |
| 31/03/2025 | ADOBE Systems Software Ireland | £16.64 | Acrobat Pro subs |
| 31/03/2025 | UK Fuels Limited | £79.82 | Fuel AJ23 ZLN |

| | | | |
|------------|--------------------------------|-----------|---------------------------------|
| 31/03/2025 | Selmec (Lincoln) Ltd | £780.00 | External lighting repairs - Hub |
| 31/03/2025 | TFM Countrystore | £34.75 | 5 x mole trap tunnels |
| 31/03/2025 | Selmec (Lincoln) Ltd | £692.51 | Internal lighting repairs - Hub |
| 31/03/2025 | LP Fabrications Ltd | £54.00 | Repair fence post Fen Lane |
| 31/03/2025 | Rialtas Business Solutions Ltd | £336.00 | Staff training x3 |
| 31/03/2025 | Lincolnshire Association of Lo | £246.00 | LALC Annual Trg scheme 25_26 |
| 31/03/2025 | Dack Conversions Ltd | £660.00 | Reversing camera fit AJ24 FYA |
| 31/03/2025 | Screwfix Direct Ltd (Trade UK) | £96.00 | 6 x 9ltr shed and fence paint |
| 31/03/2025 | Screwfix Direct Ltd (Trade UK) | £115.99 | Key cabinet |
| 31/03/2025 | R W Tree Services | £1,500.00 | Remove Oak tree (Mill Lane) |
| 31/03/2025 | Air IT Limited | £6,766.80 | IT Annual MSA 25-26 |
| 31/03/2025 | Flagpole Express Ltd | £57.96 | 'Lest We Forget' flag |

TOTAL: £60,974.60

Appendix 2 – Earmarked Reserves as at 31st March 2025

09/04/2025

North Hykeham Town Council 2024/2025

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Earmarked Reserves

| <u>Account</u> | <u>Opening Balance</u> | <u>Net Transfers</u> | <u>Closing Balance</u> |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| 322 EMR - Playground equipment | 0.00 | 32,580.00 | 32,580.00 |
| 323 EMR - Cemetery | 0.00 | 20,000.00 | 20,000.00 |
| 324 EMR - Skatepark | 0.00 | 3,783.00 | 3,783.00 |
| 325 EMR - Elections | 0.00 | 1,444.00 | 1,444.00 |
| 326 EMR - HR | 0.00 | 11,000.00 | 11,000.00 |
| 327 EMR - Twinning | 0.00 | 439.00 | 439.00 |
| 328 EMR - Community Hub dev. | 500,000.00 | | 500,000.00 |
| 329 EMR - Strategic Planning | 17,492.32 | | 17,492.32 |
| 330 EMR - Planning consultations | 0.00 | 3,000.00 | 3,000.00 |
| 331 EMR - Streetlights | 0.00 | 2,049.00 | 2,049.00 |
| 334 EMR - CIL1 300926 | 102,408.18 | -77,133.83 | 25,274.35 |
| 335 EMR - CIL2 310327 | 0.00 | 30,832.08 | 30,832.08 |
| 336 EMR - CIL3 300927 | 0.00 | 1,750.99 | 1,750.99 |
| 337 EMR - S106 (Clydra) Poppyfield | 9,179.75 | | 9,179.75 |
| 338 EMR - CIL4 310328 | 0.00 | 34,443.13 | 34,443.13 |
| 339 EMR - CIL5 310329 | 0.00 | 2,561.29 | 2,561.29 |
| 344 EMR - St Aiden Regen Project | 0.00 | 2,360.33 | 2,360.33 |
| | <u>629,080.25</u> | <u>69,108.99</u> | <u>698,189.24</u> |