

# Wyton on the Hill Parish Council

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## Annual Parish Meeting

**Tuesday 10 May 2022 7:00pm – Wyton on the Hill Primary School.**

Present: Councillor Mark Looker (Chairman), Councillor Rebecca Coulter (Vice Chairman) Councillor David Keane

In Attendance: Ms. N. Webber (Clerk), Mr S Savege (Caretaker) and 2 members of the public.

## Minutes

### **1. Welcome by the chairman of the parish council**

Councillor Looker welcomed everyone to the meeting

### **2. Apologies - To receive and approve apologies for absence**

Apologies have been received from Councillor Bhunu who was at work and Councillor Bladen who had a last minute home emergency. Councillor Looker proposed acceptance of these apologies and this was seconded by Councillor Keane.

### **3. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 2024**

The Clerk forgot to bring a copy of the minutes so these will be signed in the June meeting.

### **4. Report from the Chairman of Wyton on the Hill Parish Council**

This was presented by Councillor Looker and is attached to these minutes.

### **5. Financial report from the clerk to the council**

This was presented by the Clerk and is attached to the minutes.

### **6. To invite community representatives to address the meeting.**

The Clerk invited community representatives to send in reports and received them from the school. These are attached to the minutes.

### **7. To invite the public to raise any matters of interest**

There were no matters of interest received.

### **8. Questions for County and District councillors**

The Chair welcomed Councillor Keane from the District Council and his report is attached to the minutes.

### **9. Chairman's closing remarks**

The Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The meeting closed at 7.25pm

## Chairmans Report 2024/25

Welcome everyone to the Annual Parish Meeting.

Every year we do a Chairperson's roundup to highlight a few of the things that we have done throughout the year and some of the things that may come up in the next 12 months. As it is once again that time of year I am duty bound to provide you with an update of some of the things the Parish Council has been up to, and hopefully you will see that we have made good progress on our projects and scored some successes with our engagements with stakeholders and other relevant organisations.

Last year I split this update into 3 main pillars, so it makes sense for me to do so again:

The first is projects. I have highlighted before that we are one of the few Parish Councils in the country to not own anything directly and this adds a layer of complication to our efforts to seek funding and engagement. Cllrs Bladen and Waclawyj have been looking for any opportunity to obtain money from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund in recognition of the significant numbers of serving personnel in the parish, but this has likely been impacted by the change in national government over the last year. However, our continued project focusing on road safety is well into its second phase with the purchasing of Speed Indicator Devices and the agreement from Cambridgeshire County Council to provide the final piece of infrastructure to allow us to put these in place in the coming months. The data that we hope to collect from these SID's will then allow us to move onto the third phase of the project which will be to provide enough data for the police to encourage them to make a few highly visible visits up here for enforcement each year – something that would not have even been a conversation several years ago. I would like to thank my colleagues for their help in obtaining the funding, making the decisions on how we spend it and their enduring patience in this long drawn out process that has taken several years to reach this point.

The second pillar revolves around community engagement. We were sad to see CoderDojo leave us due to unforeseen circumstances and despite our best efforts we could not find enough impetus within local stakeholders to ensure that it could continue, however the Parish Council has not stopped there and we continue to engage with other organisations to help fill the gap and hope that something can be announced in the coming months. We have also continued to provide funding to the school for various activities including Santas Grotto and wreathmaking, as well as the yearly remembrance display. We have also continued to fund children's groups and family sessions at the school which receive regular attendance and we receive positive feedback for these efforts. This is in addition to our regular engagement with Christmas, Easter and Halloween events whenever possible which is usually done via the school. Our stakeholder engagement has continued with us providing funding for AirPlay (run by the Station) to have a visit to Grafham Water, as well as my usual engagement with the Community Support Team.

Finally I wish to mention some significant engagement with the local MP, who has been keen to hear the views of the Parish council's in his area by inviting us to a roundtable session in Westminster in March – I represented to views of our community by highlighting the worries around the lack of support infrastructure for the increased housebuilding that is likely to happen in the area, but also the impact that poor services in the area are likely to have on our military constituents. This has included issues around the Business from Home Policy that has the potential to negatively impact serving families finances, and also the issues that Cambridgeshire has regarding SEN (Special Educational Needs) provisions and the disproportionate knock on effect this has on serving families children. This engagement has resulted in parliamentary questions and responses from the Veterans Minister – I take this as a positive from the new MP as there is no record of any engagement with our previous incumbent.

The third pillar is quality of life issues. There has been recent improvement to the lighting situation with the lights in the Nursery Car Park finally being repaired after a significant amount of badgering by the community. We have also had a commitment from DIO to ensure that the dog bin on Cornwall road will be appropriately replaced and it appears that it is being emptied on a more regular basis in the last few weeks. We have also ensured that the defibrillators on the Parish have had their batteries replaced, as well as assisting our neighbours at Pine Hill Park with theirs.

Finally, I would be proud to mention the efforts of my colleagues who are part of Wyton the Hill Parish Council, without whom none of these projects, and the decisions around these projects could be made. The positivity,

inquisitiveness, patience, knowledge and sheer determination from my colleagues makes me feel proud to be a Parish Councillor, and without them WOTH would not be such a positive place to live and work. I am privileged to know you all.

I thank you all for your patience and attendance.

## Clerk and RFO report 2024/25

It's hard to believe its been a year since the last APM/AGM. As a council we are still lucky to have Councillor Looker as our Chair, backed up with Councillor Waclawyj (Previously Coulter) as our Vice Chair. Together with our councillors, Councillor Keane, Councillor Bhunu, Councillor Bladen and Councillor Gregory they have made quite the team for our small parish. Unfortunately we have to say goodbye to Councillor Gregory now as work and family commitments mean he is unable to dedicate the time he wants to to his role. Thank you, Councillor Gregory, for all your hard work over the past year. We are still recruiting for new councillors which seems to get harder and harder each year.

I will meet with the internal auditor soon to complete and sign the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2025 and all the paperwork will be submitted to PKF Littlejohn in the required timescale. The internal auditor was happy with the progress of the Parish Council and its reporting in 2024. The external auditors contacted the clerk to say the Council did not have to have an internal audit due to the amount of precept set and could be exempt. The Council decided at the meeting in July to stay with the external audit so that everything on the council was transparent.

The precept was set at £22,500 (at a meeting in November) which is £2,500 higher than the previous year and was paid into the Instant Access Account in April 2025. This was raised due to the rising costs associated with the cost of living and the impact it had on the budget this year.

The Unity Trust Bank Current Account started the year on 1st April 2024 with a balance of £1,598.04 and as of 31st March 2024 ended a balance of £3,575.37 in the current account.

The Unity Trust Bank Instant Access Account started the year on 1st April 2024 with a balance of £48,396.52 and as of 31st March 2025 ended with a balance of £32,233.67

Interest on the Instant Access Account was received on:

30 June 2024	Credit Interest	£216.18
30 Sept 2024	Credit Interest	£262.19
31 Dec 2024	Credit Interest	£291.17
31 Mar 2025	Credit Interest	£332.61

Other receipts into the Instant Access Account were:

24 Apr 2024	HDC Precept	£20,000
29 Apr 2025	HDC Precept	£22,500

The most significant payments for the council this year have been for the speed indicator devices (SID) for the estate which the council hope to have installed as soon as possible. This required asking stakeholders for permission and consultation with CCC Highways and the chair for locations. The SID's require specific poles as the council purchased solar devices to save on having to constantly replace batteries.

This next year I would still like to focus on updating all of our documents and trying to recruit a new councillor. I will continue to populate the website and social media with all relevant documents sent through to keep parishioners as up to date as possible with local events and activities. The new noticeboard has been installed so copies of the minutes and posters can again be seen for those without the internet.

I would like to again thank all our councillors for all their hard work especially through the last couple of years and for working so well together as a Parish Council and a community. A special thanks must go out also to 2 of our councillors who have had babies in the past year and still attend and dedicate their time to the Parish Council, thank you ladies. All our councillors have full time roles as well as juggling their parish council work. I say it every year but I am proud to clerk for this Parish Council and how we work as a team.

**Nykki Webber - Parish Clerk and RFO**

**Annual Report for Parish Meetings May / June 2025**  
**Hemingford Grey, Wyton on the Hill, and Houghton & Wyton**  
**District Councillor David Keane**

**Council Leadership and Governance**

The Authority continues to operate under a Joint Administration comprising six political groups, holding 33 of the 52 available seats.

**Leadership Changes**

Our Chief Executive, Michelle Sacks, has implemented significant changes to the senior leadership team and middle management structures, including updates to senior officer positions.

**Constitutional Review**

A comprehensive review of the Council Constitution was initiated to modernise operational procedures. However, this review has been superseded by the Government's Local Government Reorganisation initiative.

**Local Government Reorganisation**

**Key Points:**

- HDC will likely cease to exist between 2026 and 2028
- The Government's mandate requires removal of all two-tier Councils (Counties and Districts/Boroughs)
- Greater powers will be devolved to mayoral authorities
- All constituent councils (except Fenland District Council) have agreed to collaborate via joint letter
- Detailed structural plans are expected by November 2025
- The 2026 HDC elections may be cancelled (final decision expected early 2026)

**Service Delivery Updates**

**Waste Management**

**Green Bin Collection:**

- Annual charge implemented in 2024
- Renewal subscriptions currently underway
- Impact assessment ongoing regarding:
  - o Landfill reduction
  - o Recycling rates
  - o Food waste management
  - o Fly-tipping incidents
  - o Revenue generation vs. environmental costs

**Food Waste Collection:**

- New government initiative scheduled for 2026
- Will include provision of new food waste caddies

**Parking Enforcement**

- Civil parking enforcement progressing
- Target implementation date: August 2025

**Financial Matters**

**Council Tax**

- Annual increase of £5 implemented

**Planning Application Fees**

- New fee structure introduced to:
  - o Generate additional revenue
  - o Improve application processing times
  - o Address approval delays

**Planning and Development**

**Enforcement Challenges**

Planning enforcement continues to face significant challenges with:

- Increasing caseload
- Resource limitations
- Processing delays

**Local Plan Development**

The new Local Plan faces complications due to:

- Revised government housing targets
- HDC entering 'tilted balance' status (insufficient 5-year housing supply)
- Potential resolution within 18 months
- Risk of development outside existing and emerging local plans

Current Impact: Development applications not aligned with existing or proposed local plans may receive more favourable consideration due to tilted balance status.



## Wyton on the Hill Community Primary School

### Head teacher's Report for the Parish Council May 9<sup>th</sup> 2024

What a difference a year makes!

This time last year we were looking forward to the King's Coronation and an extra Bank Holiday, whilst awaiting a visit from Ofsted and preparing for a busy summer term with 7 classes and our preschool.

As a school, we celebrated the Coronation by planning a special 'Coronation biodiversity / wilding garden' with children from every class helping to choose what to plant and what to build in order to attract more wildlife to our school grounds. We are looking forward to the wildflowers we planted blooming at any time now and to seeing an increase in the number of insects and birds as we enjoy the summer sun.

The children were also both surprised and delighted to receive the gift of a special commemorative Coronation medal from yourselves at the Parish Council, thank you!

Our Ofsted did arrive, as expected, in May – though all of us (including the inspection team members) were surprised that they arrived on the second day of the Key Stage 2 SATs. But we adapted as we always do, making the best of their visit and retaining our judgement of 'Good'.

We ended the summer term positively, with outstanding results in our Key Stage 2 maths, with an Eco-schools Green Flag Award for the second year running and some memorable individual and team performances from our children at their end of year summer concerts, plays and assemblies.

This academic year has brought both challenges and opportunities.

For the past two and a half years, the school has been subject to a falling roll due to the posting of so many of our Service families away from Wyton, resulting in a significant loss in pupil

funding as well as the concomitant capacity to generate the necessary additional income required to support essential operational services such as wraparound care and school meals. Whilst revenue has fallen year on year in line with the school's falling roll, the cost of services, utilities, human resources and buildings maintenance have all risen sharply, in some areas doubling.

Despite efforts to reduce costs, including two rounds of class restructuring over the past year, which has reduced the number of classes from 7 to 5 since July 2023, we are facing the prospect of having to downsize again as our numbers continue to fall and we are having to adjust to the reality that we are now officially a 'small school'.

Still, as the old adage says 'small is beautiful' and we have much to be proud of and to look forward to...

We remain a strong school team, with fantastic staff, lovely children and supportive parents.

We have the support of a hard-working and dedicated Governing Body and a School & Community Association that is the envy of all my colleagues.

We have an amazing (albeit very expensive) new building and have invested time in building a curriculum we can all enjoy over the year to come.

And we know that we have the support of a strong and capable Parish Council.

We look forward to working with you all over the next year.

Jo Phillips (Head teacher)