



Minutes of the full Council Meeting held on **Wednesday 27th November, 2024** at 6:00pm in the Council Chamber at Franklin Hall, Spilsby. These are notes of the meeting until approved by the Town Council as a true and accurate record.

Present:

Cllrs L Day (Mayor), L Marsh (Deputy Mayor), A Day, M Gibson, T Kemp, E Marsh, W Rose, and T Taylor.

Town Clerk - J Sargent and Deputy Town Clerk - S Thomas.

There were six members of the public in attendance.

Public Session

Cllr L Day invited members of the public to speak.

Resident 1 read out a statement on behalf of various residents regarding the proposed repair to fencing owned by Longhurst Housing Group which would close a gap between the driveway of 6 Fitzjames Close and the property boundary of the Masons building. Longhurst Housing Group proposed repairing the fence following a complaint from a resident about the condition and safety of the step.

Resident 1 suggested that Longhurst Housing Group have previously failed to maintain the area and reasoned that the path alongside Franklin Hall is too steep for elderly residents. Whilst the resident acknowledged the fence was not the Town Council's responsibility, requested that the Town Council contact Longhurst Housing Group to see if they would reconsider the proposed repair works as the gap has been used for 30 years and if refused, asked the Town Council to seek a right of easement by prescription.

Resident 1 also asked if the Town Council would also contact Lincolnshire County Council's Highways Department at about the street lights in the town centre, particularly on Market Street as they don't appear to be very bright. The resident suggested that, women and older residents feel unsafe when walking around the town in the dark and think the lights need to be brighter.

Cllr L Day asked the Clerk to write to Longhurst Housing Group, relaying the concerns expressed by residents and to write to the County Council about the street lights.

Resident 2 explained that since moving to a property in this area of the town he has regularly cleared Fitzjames Close of weeds and litter, and arranged for the step to be repaired so that it's safe for residents use. The resident suggested that although there is a footpath at the side of Franklin Hall which people do use, it is uneven due to tree roots damaging the tarmac.

Resident 3 suggested that the new fencing would be vandalized or used as a goalpost and accused Longhurst Housing Group of wanting to gain an extra parking space. The resident mentioned the difficulty in using the footpath at the side of Franklin Hall due to it being steep.

Resident 4 mentioned feeling vulnerable when walking through the town centre due to the street lights particularly when starting and finishing work in the dark.

Resident 5 also commented on the street lights, who as a business owner in town, and explained that the lights are on a timer in the business and has safety protocols for staff leaving the premises for safety reasons.

With no further questions or comments, Cllr L Day thanked the residents for attending.

To receive a report from Lincolnshire County Councillor W Bowkett

No report received.

To receive a report from District County Councillor E Marsh

No report received.

With no further matters, it was **resolved unanimously** to move into formal session.

95. Welcome

Cllr L Day welcomed all present, reminding Councillors about emergency exits and safety protocols, to turn phones off and appropriate conduct.

96. Apologies

It was **resolved unanimously** to accept apologies from Cllr D Mangion.

97. Declarations of Interest

None received.

98. To approve as a correct record the minutes of the full Council Meeting held on Wednesday 23rd October 2024.

With no matters arising, it was **resolved unanimously** to accept the minutes for October as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

99. To approve the accounts for October 2024.

With no matters arising, it was **resolved unanimously** to approve the accounts for October 2024. The Accounts Report included as an attachment to these minutes.

100. To receive a bank reconciliation for October 2024.

The Clerk provided a bank reconciliation to keep Councillors up to date with the Town Council's financial status, for information purposes only. The Bank Reconciliation Report included as an attachment to these minutes.

101. To receive brief reports from the Town Mayor, Town Council's working groups, representatives on outside bodies and the Town Clerk.

Mayor's Report

Cllr L Day reported attending the Remembrance Day Parade and laid a wreath on behalf of the Town Council. Cllr L Day reported that the parade was very well attended and the town was well decorated with poppies.

Cllr Taylor attended the Remembrance Day Service at RAF Spilsby and laid a wreath on behalf of the Town Council and mentioned that there were around 80 people at the service. Pictures from the day can be viewed on the Friends of RAF Spilsby Facebook page.

The Clerk reported that the Secretary of Friends of RAF Spilsby wanted to place on record his thanks to Cllr Taylor and the Town Council for their support.

Recreation Ground

Cllr E Marsh reported that no further progress had been made regarding the new development.

Grammar School Foundation

Cllr Gibson reported receiving a more detailed application from the Spilsby Academy and that the Committee have now asked that schools provide receipts to show what the donation is being spent on.

Poorlands

Cllr L Marsh reported that a meeting is due to take place in December and following that payments will be issued.

Twinning Association

Cllr L Marsh was unable to attend a recent meeting but the Deputy Town Clerk was in attendance and reported that the Committee have a proposed date in July for the Germans to visit and will contact them in due course to see if this date is suitable.

The Committee have received several dates from the Twinning Committee in Fresnay Sur Sarthe for them to visit. The dates suggested are unsuitable as they are over Bank Holidays, so the Spilsby Committee have suggested alternative dates in either April or September. The French Twinning Committee are yet to respond.

Tickets are on sale now for the Bluestones Concert in January 2025. The Twinning Committee have also booked Partney Village Hall for their Race Night due to take place in March 2025.

Good Neighbourhood Scheme

Cllr Gibson reported that a Committee Meeting took place and are still in the process of winding down. They are due to have a Coffee Morning in December and are also planning a morning where residents can have soup and a roll. After this event a decision will then be made on what happens next as they have not received any referrals in the past few months.

Community Speedwatch

Cllr A Day explained that an email had been sent out by Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership asking the volunteers inform them in advance what days Speedwatch sessions will be taking place.

Cllr E Marsh reported a very successful Speedwatch session recently, where the Police attended and assisted for a short time. Cllr E Marsh mentioned the difficulty in holding sessions at this time of year due to poor visibility and weather conditions, but will endeavor to get out again soon.

Cllr Rose suggested that Halton Road appears to be an area where a lot of speeding takes place and asked if the speed limit could be painted on the road. Cllr L Day asked the Clerk to write to the Highways Department about this.

Spilsby Events Team

Cllr L Day invited the Chair of the Events Team to report on the preparations for the Christmas Market taking place on Saturday 7th December. The Chair reported that they hope to have 25 stalls on the High Street, a food court area in the Buttercross car park and 9 acts throughout the day - with entertainment provided by Session Arts costing around £5,000.00. The team have organised a walking parade together with various groups leading 'Father Christmas' to the Christmas Tree for the switch on, but children will be able to see Father Christmas in his grotto throughout the day which will be located in 'All Wrapped Up' Coffee Shop. The Spilsby Christian Fellowship are also holding their Christmas Family Crafts Day and Spilsby Rotary Club are holding their Christmas Cracker Day at the Franklin. St. James Church will also be open for their Christmas Tree Festival.

Town Clerk's Report

A written report from the Town Clerk was circulated via email prior to the meeting, included as an attachment to these minutes.

The Clerk asked for feedback regarding a potential consultation form which could go out to all residents in the January edition of the Spilsby Explorer magazine.

The Clerk sought feedback from Councillors on contacting the families of graves that contravene the Cemetery Policy such as having fencing around the plots or by placing stones on the grave which makes it difficult for the maintenance team. It states in the Policy that this is not allowed but it appears that the majority of these are children's graves. Cllr Taylor explained that this has been discussed previously and it is a delicate subject. It was suggested that an area in the new section be cordoned off and used purely for the burial of children which would stop this issue in the future. It was agreed that this should not be progressed any further for the time being and for the Clerk to speak with the maintenance team.

The Clerk asked whether the Council want to allow a garden maintenance firm to continue cutting the holly tree in the Cemetery. Representatives of the firm called into the office stating that they previously gave a £100 donation but the Clerk confirmed that this had not been received in recent years. It was agreed to allow the firm to continue to maintain the holly tree, provided a donation is made to the Town Council. The Clerk to update the maintenance company.

The Clerk provided a draft of a letter to Councillors that could be sent to the owner of 1 Market Place (the old Normics Building) and sought feedback as to whether Councillors would like this letter to be sent. Senior Planning Officers from East Lindsey District Council have contacted the Town Council recently to explain that they do not think that this building is detrimental to the town. The Clerk has responded by asking them to quantify this and what evidence could the Town Council provide to say it is. The Clerk yet to receive a response from the Planning Officer. Councillors asked the Clerk to send the letter.

The Town Clerk reported that he had been in contact with the Chair of the Recreation Ground Committee to see if it would be possible to have CCTV installed at the Play Area and connected it into their recording system. The Chair advised that the cost would be in the region £800 to £1,250 for this to be done. Councillors agreed to put an allocation for this in the 2025-26 budget.

102. To receive an update on the Markets Committee.

Cllr Rose asked if the Town Clerk had received any correspondence from the new Markets Officer at East Lindsey District Council. The Clerk explained that he had sent an email asking for a suitable date to hold a meeting but had not received a response. The Clerk to chase it up again.

Cllr E Marsh asked the other members on the Town Council's Markets Committee what they had done so far. Cllr Rose explained that a previous Town Councillor had been in contact with several traders who were keen to come to the Market but there was an issue with no access to electricity.

Cllr E Marsh clarified that the report created from feedback about the market was that the market required a change of day and that the group should come up with a plan for the next 8 months to put to the Market Officers. Cllr E Marsh suggested that there are several successful markets in the district not run by ELDC and insisted that the Markets Committee need to come up with a schedule to present to the Markets Officer as a better alternative to the current Monday Market. Cllr E Marsh suggested speaking to the fish trader and to the refreshment van owner to come to these markets instead and to stop the Monday market entirely.

Cllr Taylor advised that the role of new Markets Officer would be to advertise the current market and recruit traders.

Cllr Rose queried who would be organising the new market and who would create the plan and schedule for the new market.

The Town Clerk suggested an idea to help revive Spilsby's market as a new once a month market day which would require help from neighbouring market towns, who have multiple market days in a week, in the interest of co-operation and support. It would mean neighbouring towns who hold a market on Spilsby's new market day, cancel their market for that one day of the month to allow market traders and customers to come to Spilsby. This would also mean that ELDC resources would not be stretched. This would help Spilsby Market as it would not be competing for traders and customers with the likes of Louth and Horncastle. Traders would be in a new town with potentially different customers. With the possibility of no market in neighbouring towns, residents from those towns might visit Spilsby.

Councillors asked the Town Clerk to chase the Markets Officer and copy in Cllrs E Marsh and T Kemp.

Cllr L Marsh suggested that the members of the Market Committee get together to agree suggested dates for the market and plan how this can be moved forward.

103. To appoint members to additional responsibilities groups: To consider Grant applications from:

a. Spilsby Events Team for:

- i. A contribution towards the Music License.**
- ii. A contribution towards the annual insurance.**
- iii. A contribution towards the flags.**

Cllr Taylor suggested that groups such as the Events Team and Spilsby Twinning should have a separate allocation in the budget each year as a regular donation and that other groups in the town apply for a donation as and when they need support. Cllr Rose suggested putting this on the next agenda.

With no objections, it was **resolved unanimously** to donate £865.00 to the Events Team towards a music license and new flags.

The Chair of the Events Team suggested meeting with the Town Council to discuss events for 2025.

b. Spilsby and Hundleby Walkers Are Welcome

With no objections, it was **resolved unanimously** to donate £290.00 to the Spilsby and Hundleby Walkers are Welcome group.

104. To consider options for the Town Council's bank accounts.

The Town Clerk explained that Lloyds Bank are introducing a charge of around £50.00 per annum. The interest gained on the reserves is around £200.00 per month, so this offsets their charges. The Town Clerk works for a Parish Council that has an account with the Co-Op who do not have any charges. The Clerk advised that it has really poor user platform in comparison to Lloyds and recommended remaining with Lloyds. It was **resolved unanimously** to remain with Lloyds Bank and for the Clerk to write a letter of complaint regarding the introduction of charges.

105. To consider a response to Government consultations on virtual meetings and proxy voting.

The Clerk explained that Councillors can respond individually but would like to submit a response as a collective.

Cllr L Marsh supported the idea of hybrid meetings, suggesting that there have been improvements in technology to facilitate this, it would make local government more inclusive and help Councillors who are care givers.

Cllr Gibson suggested that although this is a good idea, there should be requirements for Councillors to attend a minimum number of meetings in-person.

Cllr Taylor also agreed that this is a good idea provided there are requirements such as the majority of Councillors attending in-person.

Cllr Rose suggested that virtual meetings should not be used as a replacement of in-person meetings, but supported the idea if it helps Councillors to attend more meetings.

Cllr Kemp supported the idea of hybrid meetings, but advised the cost implications needs to be addressed before being implemented.

Cllr E Marsh mentioned that the Local Government Act of 1972 needs updating to reflect modern day Britain and raised this issue recently with the District Council. It's not always possible to attend meetings, but meeting attendance doesn't reflect the work done as a Councillor. Cllr E Marsh will be attending a meeting in Westminster in relation to women in politics and moving items such as this forward.

It was **resolved unanimously** to support hybrid meetings with certain criteria such as attending a minimum number of meetings in-person and the majority of attendees are in-person.

The Clerk explained that proxy voting was allowing a Councillor to vote on behalf of another who had submitted apologies.

Cllr Kemp suggested this was not appropriate as Councillors not in attendance would not have heard the debate, not had the opportunity to have their opinion altered in the course of the debate.

It was **resolved unanimously** not to support proxy voting. The Clerk to respond to the consultation.

106. To consider a response to ELDC's review of support for Town and Parishes across East Lindsey survey.

The Town Clerk explained that Councillors can respond individually but would like to submit a response as a collective. Both the Clerk and Deputy Clerk have already responded individually.

The Clerk read through the questions and gave examples of potential responses. Cllr Taylor suggested including issues with communication which was reiterated by Cllr Kemp who advised ELDC are aware of this issue.

The Clerk mentioned that there is a general lack of support from ELDC especially with regards to such issues as the derelict building in the Market Place and the Rose Garden and suggested that other towns get preferential treatment from ELDC. A copy of the completed survey to be submitted by the Clerk and included as an attachment to these minutes.

107. To approve a provider for a training course on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and to include the cost for all Councillors and Clerks in the 2025-26 budget.

Cllr L Marsh suggest that in order to be a progressive and forward-thinking Council, all Councillors together with the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk, should attend a training course on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. The LALC training course looks to be the most suitable and offers the best price. Cllr L Marsh requested that funding for this be included as part of the budget for 2025-26 and that Councillors and Clerks attend.

Cllr Kemp queried the cost implications and whether it was a legal requirement. Cllr Gibson questioned whether there would be sufficient funds allocated in the budget.

The Town Clerk explained the cost would be £25.00 per person, that it was an 'E-Learning Course' and would require a slight increase to the training allocation in the 2025-26 budget. Cllr L Marsh confirmed it was not a legal requirement.

It was **resolved unanimously** to include in the 2025-26 budget and arrange training for Councillors.

108. Financial Planning 2025-26:

a. To consider a draft budget and precept request for 2025-26.

Cllr Taylor recommended including an allocation for a new CCTV system that feeds directly to the control centre in Boston and suggested installing an electricity feed into the market place.

The Clerk confirmed the current ongoing costs for the CCTV was £3,000.00 per year and was previously quoted £2,000.00 per year to connect to the control centre in Boston, as well as £20,000.00 for a new CCTV set to allow the connection to the control centre.

Cllr L Marsh requested an allocation for new Christmas lights and whether an allocation to further improvements to the play area had been made. The Clerk advised £10,000.00 had been allocated to a new Christmas lights display for 2025 and £30,000.00 to further additions in the play area.

Cllr Kemp questioned the recommend precept request, whether there is parity in the income and expenditure and requested the forecast for the end of the current financial year.

The Town Clerk explained that the total expenditure for 2025-26 is projected to be approximately £107,000.00 without putting any funds into the earmarked reserves. The Clerk recommended moving funds to the earmarked reserves and operational contingency fund to comply with the Financial Regulations. A precept requested increase of 3% would provide a guaranteed income of £155,707.00. The Clerk advised that if a new CCTV system was to be included in the budget it would require an increase of 17.5% which would provide an extra £20,000.00 to the budget or allocations could be amended elsewhere in the budget.

Cllr Rose suggested that a 25% increase would mean the precept had doubled in 5 years and queried what would be a reasonable increase avoid consternation from residents. Cllr L Marsh suggested that a 17.5% increase would allow the Town Council to have a bigger impact on the community - completing the play area sooner, adding to the safety of the town by improving the CCTV after the removal of the town's PCSOs, improving the Christmas lights display and further restoring the reserves in line with the Financial Regulations.

It was **resolved unanimously** to request a precept of £177,626.96, on the assumption of a tax base of 902. This would mean an increase of 17.5%, £196.92 for a band D property, an annual increase of £29.33. The Clerk to amend the allocations in the budget and confirm at the January meeting.

Cllr L Marsh requested an explanation and breakdown is put in the Explorer magazine so the public are aware of the Council's plans and spending. The Clerk to arrange.

109. To review advertising for vacancies on the Town Council discuss ideas for recruiting potential candidates.

There are currently 3 vacancies on the Town Council; no interest has been registered in the vacancies. The Town Clerk suggested that Councillor Surgeries might help recruit new members when they start.

Cllr Taylor suggested that residents be invited to Council meetings to see what is discussed. Cllr Kemp advised the Council is currently functioning well but recognised the importance of having a full Council to share the workload. Cllr E Marsh suggested that misconceptions about being a

Councillor and being on the Council needs to be broken down; people with all different skills are required to help the Council and the Town be successful and move forward.

110. To consider Policies:

- a. **Data Breach Policy**
- b. **Document and Record Retention Policy**
- c. **Disciplinary Policy**
- d. **Employee Management Policy**
- e. **Environmental Policy**
- f. **Equality and Diversity Policy**
- g. **Expenses Policy**
- h. **Flexible Working Time Policy**
- i. **ICT Policy**
- j. **Reasonable Adjustments Policy**
- k. **Recruitment and Selection Policy**
- l. **Volunteer Policy**

Policies were circulated with Councillors prior to the meeting in line with the Policy Review Procedure. With no further comments, it was **resolved unanimously** to adopt the Policies.

111. To consider terms of reference for:

- a. **Grievance Committee**

The Grievance Committee Terms of Reference was circulated with Councillors prior to the meeting in line with the Policy Review Procedure. With no further comments, it was **resolved unanimously** to adopt the Terms of Reference.

112. To resolve to exclude the public and the media to discuss confidential matters in accordance with The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

It was **resolved unanimously** to exclude members of the Public and Media to allow the Town Council to discuss confidential matters.

113. To receive an update on issues at the Allotments.

The Town Clerk provided an update of ongoing issues at the allotments and action planned to bring the issues to a conclusion. It was **resolved unanimously** to proceed with the recommended action.

114. To receive an update on staffing matters.

The Clerk updated Councillors on the recent pay award agreement between the Local Government Association and the National Association of Local Councils. This will affect staff salaries, which has been budgeted for.

With no further matters, Cllr L Day closed the meeting at 7:50pm.

Signed.....
Deputy Town Mayor - Cllr L Marsh

Signed.....
Town Clerk to the Council - J Sargent

22nd January 2025