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MINUTES

Minutes of Holcot Full Parish Council meeting held on **Monday 17th November 2025** at 7.00pm,
Church Room, Main Street, Holcot, Northampton NN6 9SP

Present:

Councillors: Chair - Cllr Chris Bailey, Vice Chair - Cllr Tony Hewitt , Cllr Lesley Burns,
Cllr Paul Higham, Cllr Jackie Watson, Cllr Deryck Watson

Public: None

Clerk: Ruby Cole

25/266	Apologies: Cllr A Hanrahan, Ward Cllr Cecile Irving-Swift. Resolved: Council accepted the above apologies.	
25/267	Public address to the council: None.	
25/268	Declarations of Interest: Resolved: None	
25/269	Minutes: Full Parish Council meeting Monday 20 th October 2025. Resolved: Minutes approved. Chair signed at meeting.	
25/270	Actions Outstanding: See end of document for full update.	
25/271	Correspondence: 1. 04.11.25. Green Hill Solar - Invite to Landscape and Visual Impact session 13.11.25. Expired 2. 29.10.25. Resident - Parking on King George's Field. Noted. 30.10.25 Response sent as decision already made. 3. 26.10.25. Resident - Parking on King George's Field. Noted. 30.10.25 Response sent as decision already made. <i>Post Agenda</i> 4. 14.11.25. CPRE - Request to join. To be placed on agenda for next meeting. Action 25/171.4 5. 14.11.25. WNC - Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Views sought on a policy outlining how developers contribute to local infrastructure.	Clerk

	<p>Consultation closes 21.12.25. Noted. Has been placed on parish council website.</p> <p>6. 12.11.25. WNC - Community Resilience Project. To be placed on agenda for next meeting. Action 25/171.6</p> <p>7. 11.11.25. Northants PFCC - Consultation launched on funding for policing and fire and rescue services in Northamptonshire. Consultation closes 05.01.26. Noted. Has been placed on parish council website.</p>	Clerk
25/272	<p>Planning Notices:</p> <p>24.10.25. 2025/4248/FULL. Oakham Fields Sywell Road Holcot NN6 9SQ. Single storey side extension to both ends of existing dwelling, replace existing timber external wall cladding with new timber composite cladding, reposition existing wood burner and flue, associated internal alterations.</p> <p>Resolved: No objections. Clerk to send response. Action 25/272.1</p>	Clerk
25/273	Village Parking: Back Lane and other areas. Deferred to next meeting.	
25/274	Agricultural Feature on Crossroads: Cllr D Watson met with Heather from the gardening group to consider whether to return, retain, refurbish or dispose of the worzel mangler and sack barrow. Both these items are to be kept. They cannot be painted as by doing so will devalue the features. They will both be cleaned between now and the end of March.	
25/275	<p>Gardening Report: Cllr D Watson met with Heather from the gardening group to consider management of the overplanting and future upkeep in general. His full report can be found at the end of the minutes.</p> <p>Resolved: Cllr D Watson to obtain quotes for the removal of the 4 evasive plants which require digging out by a mechanical digger. Action 25/275.1. Cllr D Watson to notify Heather of outcome of meeting. Action 25/275.2</p>	DW DW
25/276	New Parishioners: None.	
25/277	Christmas Tree lights: Cllr Hewit will undertake. The lights are currently kept in the Church room storage area. Cllr Higham to obtain a spare key for access by Councillors and Clerk. Action 25/277.1	PH
25/278	Holcot Car Boot & Farmer's Market: The trading hours are in question and the WNC enforcement officer has been notified. To be placed on the agenda as a regular item until resolved. Action 25/278.1	Clerk

Regular Reports and Decisions Arising

25/279	Defibrillator: The batteries have been replaced in the defibrillator located on the telephone kiosk. The defibrillator at the village hall has been checked and is good.	
25/280	<p>Green Hill Solar Farm:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 01.11.25 Phil Mason (Grendon Parish Council) - Green Hill Solar Community Benefit query response. Noted. 28.10.25 Application by Green Hill Solar Farm Limited for an Order Granting Development Consent for the Green Hill Solar Farm Project Rule 8 Letter – Examination Timetable and Procedure. Noted and has been placed on parish council website. Stop Green Hill Solar group are still trying to raise funds to help fight their cause. Affected parishes will have a calendar page featured with images of the village. 	

25/281	Road Safety and Highways: Still waiting to hear from WNC in relation to the anticipated S106 monies.	
25/282	Police Liaison Representative: Northamptonshire Police - Street Surgery Sat 22.11.25 10:00-12:00 outside the White Horse, Old. Has been placed on parish council website. No other updates.	
25/283	Neighbourhood Watch: No updates.	
25/284	Play Equipment Inspection: No other reports other than the repair/replacement of the matting under the see-saw. Ongoing action by Clerk.	

Finance/Governance

25/285	Co-Option: No nominations received.	
25/286	Parish Engagement Annual Review: Deferred to next meeting.	
25/287	Land Ownership & Assets: Cllr Hewitt & clerk are due to meet the solicitors on 20.11.25 to sign the statutory document to register the Old School Site. Cllr Hewitt to check documents in an effort to clarify responsibility of boundary wall between the Church and the Old School Site. Action 25/287.1	TH
25/288	Work Phone: It was considered whether the clerk should have a separate phone with designated number for clerk. As the clerk does not receive many calls to her personal phone, it was decided this would not be a necessity.	
25/289	Payments: Invoices £1519.36. Resolved: Approved. Invoices signed by Cllr Higham & Cllr D Watson at meeting. Cllr Bailey & Cllr Hewitt to authorise at bank. Action 25/289.1. Due to there being no meeting in December, Council resolved to approve payments via email.	CB TH

Ref	Payee	Description	Date	Method	Amount
393	Park Landscapes	October Mowing	18/11/2025	Online	552.00
394	Clerk	November Salary inc home working	18/11/2025	Online	397.71
395	Clerk	Stationery Expenses	18/11/2025	Online	14.29
396	SSE	Street Light Electricity October 2025	18/11/2025	Online	107.23
397	Unity Trust Bank	Monthly Bank Charge October	30/11/2025	Direct	6.00
398	SSE	Street Light Electricity June - Sept 2025	18/11/2025	Online	142.13
399	P Higham	Defibrillator Batteries	18/11/2025	Online	300.00

1519.36

25/290	Financial Report/Bank Reconciliation: Unity Trust Current Account - 31.10.2025 £19,196.37. Unity Trust Instant Access Savings Account - 31.10.2025 £18,619.33. Resolved: Approved. Cllr Burns signed bank reconciliation at meeting.	
25/291	Project Proposals FY26/27: Other than general maintenance, there are no projects being considered.	

25/292	Draft Budget FY26/27: Chair went through the draft budget for the next financial year. The guide precept is £23,400, an increase of approximately 5%. The final figure to be agreed and confirmed at the January meeting. See end of minutes for calculation.	
25/293	Grants: None received at present, but expected to be received shortly.	
25/294	Next Agenda Items: None.	
25/295	Next Meeting: Monday 19 th January 2026.	

Meeting closed: 20.40

Future Meetings: 19th January 2026

16th February 2026

16th March 2026

20th April 2026

Tbc - Annual Parish Meeting (between 01.03.2026 & 01.06.2026 (Village Hall))

18th May 2026 Annual Parish Council Meeting & Full Parish Council Meeting

Action Points for Tracking

25/161.4	AH	Road Safety and Highways: To acquire VASID batteries from D Walker. Now being actioned by Cllr Hanrahan	Ongoing
25/161.5	CB	Road Safety and Highways: To change speed sign image	Ongoing
25/225.1	LB	Police Liaison Representative: To register. Also to register with Northamptonshire Talking and Neighbourhood Watch.	Ongoing
25/242.1	Clerk	Correspondence: NCalc - Planning Briefings with WNC. To obtain slides. Slides not yet available.	Ongoing
25/257.2	DW	I.T. Requirements: To contact Jenny to check she is happy to do the newsletters via a grant. Complete. New Action. Cllr D Watson to help with grant information.	Ongoing
25/255.1	Clerk	Play Equipment Inspection: To enquire with other parish councils and to obtain other supplier quotes.	Ongoing

New Actions This Meeting

25/171.4	Clerk	Correspondence: CPRE - Request to join. To be placed on agenda
25/171.6	Clerk	Correspondence: Community Resilience Project. To be placed on agenda
25/272.1	Clerk	Planning Notices: 2025/4248/FULL. Oakham Fields Sywell Road Holcot. To submit response - no objections
25/275.1	DW	Gardening Report: To obtain quotes for the removal of the 4 evasive plants.
25/275.2	DW	Gardening Report: To notify Heather of outcome of meeting.
25/277.1	PH	Christmas Tree lights: To obtain a spare key to church storage room
25/278.1	Clerk	Holcot Car Boot & Farmer's Market: To place on agenda as a regular item
25/287.1	TH	Land Ownership & Assets: To check documents in an effort to clarify responsibility of boundary wall between the Church and the Old School Site.
25/289.1	CB/TH	Payments: To authorise at bank.

Minute Item 25/270

Actions Outstanding from Holcot Parish Council meeting Monday 20th October 2025			
25/161.4	AH	Road Safety and Highways: To acquire VASID batteries from D Walker. Now being actioned by Cllr Hanrahan	Ongoing
25/161.5	CB	Road Safety and Highways: To change speed sign image	Ongoing
25/181.1	DW	Friends of Holcot - Gardening Group: To work with Heather to ascertain how this could be managed cheaply and effectively	See Item 25/275
25/225.1	LB	Police Liaison Representative: To register. Also to register with Northamptonshire Talking and Neighbourhood Watch.	Ongoing
25/242.1	Clerk	Correspondence: NCalc - Planning Briefings with WNC. To obtain slides. Slides not yet available.	Ongoing
25/242.3	Clerk	Correspondence: Quarterly update from Cllr Cecile Irving-Swift. To place on parish council website.	Complete
25/243.1	Clerk	Planning Notices: 2025/3836/MAR at Land at Overstone Lane Overstone. To write to Case Officer regarding construction traffic through the village.	Complete
25/257.1	Clerk	I.T. Requirements: To notify Ascomi of transfer of ownership to Paul Higham.	Complete
25/257.2	TH	I.T. Requirements: To contact Jenny to check she is happy to do the newsletters via a grant. Complete. New Action. Cllr D Watson to help with grant information.	Ongoing
25/248.1	AH	Christmas Tree lights: To obtain quotes	See Item 25/277

25/249.1	CB	Remembrance Sunday 09.11.2025: To place parish council logo in centre of wreath. Placed by Cllr Hewitt	Complete
25/252.1	Clerk	Road Safety and Highways: Holcot Parish Traffic Concerns from parishioner. To contact the parishioner to contact Childcare provider.	Complete
25/255.1	Clerk	Play Equipment Inspection: To enquire with other parish councils and to obtain other supplier quotes.	Ongoing
25/260.1	CB/TH	Payments: To authorise at bank.	Complete
25/263.1	Clerk	Grants: To place policies and details on parish council website.	Complete
25/264.1	Clerk	Next Agenda Items: Dedicated clerk phone. Parking on Back Lane and other areas.	Complete
25/263.1	Clerk	Next Meeting: Monday 17th November 2025. To cancel church room booking for December.	Complete

Minute Item 25/274 & 25/275

Meeting with Heather Wilson (Gardening Group) and Cllr Deryck Watson 13/11/2025

Regarding Holcot Village Crossroads Planting

The History of the Site

Heather explained that the purpose of the planting was twofold, one, that the beds would prevent vehicles parking on this corner, and two, for the aesthetic effect of the plantings. She told me that; 'many motorists have congratulated her on their efforts and the display'.

Impressions

The two beds provide a floral/horticultural display at the village crossroads; however closer inspection reveals overplanted beds with plants encroaching on and growing through each other. It consists of a mixed collection of plants without general theme or method in planting. It is clear that the beds have too many plants in them and that some removal, replacement and/or moving of plants is required.

The Objective

To focus on managing the overplanting and to consider future upkeep options.

Agreement of Actions

After discussion we agreed to remove the following large growing and/or invasive plants, one of each from each bed.

- *Leycesteria formosa* (Himalayan Honeysuckle) x 2
A vigorous, deciduous shrub with erect sea-green stems bearing long-pointed, ovate leaves and pendulous racemes of white flowers with showy red-purple bracts, followed by deep purple berries. Height & Spread 2.5metres x 2.5m metres

These plants are in the middle of each bed and have grown quickly to be dense expanding clumps, which will require significant effort in digging out and disposal.

- *Phormium tenax* (New Zealand Flax) x 2

An evergreen perennial native to New Zealand, featuring leathery, strap-shaped leaves and tubular, reddish flowers in summer. This typically grows 2.5 to 4 metres tall.

These two plants have grown quickly and will require significant effort in digging out and disposal.

- *Phalaris arundinacea* (Reed Canary Grass) x 2

A vigorous perennial grass with a running rootstock (rhizomes), forming an extensive colony of upright stems if left unattended, growing to 1.5m tall in flower, bearing narrow, linear, mid-green leaves to 35cm long, and narrow panicles to 17cm long of pale green flower spikelets in summer.

These two specimens are relatively small at present but are growing through other plants. If left in place, they are likely to become invasive and spread to infest the area through the aggressive growth of underground rhizome roots, in the manner of native couch grass/twitch (*Elymus repens*).

Heather has requested to keep these plants for re-planting elsewhere, not on public land administered by HPC.

- I also requested that the large growing *Sambucus nigra* (a pair, one each side of the stone bench) should be removed as if not properly maintained, and perhaps even if properly maintained, they have the potential to outgrow the entire site. They are, however, very attractive plants and form a key part of the display, but they have the potential to grow to 4 metres, or for some cultivars, 8 metres in height with similar spread. They have recently been cut back and Heather was emphatic that they should stay and would be controlled by her group with annual cutting back, as has been done this autumn. I accepted this, but with strong reservations. It is worth noting that if removed the appearance of the site would be devalued until alternatives become established.

Vintage Agricultural Equipment

Heather prefers the farming equipment to stay; 'illustrating Holcot's farming heritage'. I pointed out that they may present an accident/injury hazard. Heather disagreed, pointing out that there has been no problem to date.

Regarding appearance of the equipment, Heather advised me that Roger Gunnett is prepared to 'oil it' to present a better appearance and help to protect it from the elements. For clarity, the Mangelwurzel Chopper is the property of Roger Gunnett and the 'lifting sack barrow' the property that of Heather Wilson.

Upright slates/stones

I believe that these are a health and safety hazard in this public space, particularly alongside the attraction to sit on the circular stone bench surrounded by the plantings, passing closely by the stones. Heather agreed to remove them.

The Work Required

When asked what her group could deliver in terms of work going forward, Heather confirmed that she has a core group of women, but no men to assist with the heavier work due to the closure of the 'Friends of Holcot' group. She advised that younger residents were not joining the Gardening Group.

Limitations of The Gardening Group

Heather stated that the all-female group would not be capable of removing the plants and suggested utilising the 'handyman' now potentially available through the Council. I was noncommittal on this and stated that I must consider further what effort would be required before presenting my findings to the Holcot Parish Council.

Summary of Findings

I pointed out that, as far as I was aware, there is no specific HPC budget allocated for the kind of work required, and that before the planting of the beds the location was simply a very small cost element of the grass mowing contract in the village. Thus, as the volunteer group would be unable to satisfy the heavier aspects of the work requirement, any substantial upkeep would now be likely to come at an unplanned cost to the Council (and the parishioners), due to the work required being beyond the ability of the current volunteers. I made it clear that in these circumstances the Parish Council, would have to consider care and maintenance, or other options, and costs for the future. I have no information on the former Council's commitment to her regarding ongoing financial support.

Recommendation

As the initial work required is beyond the ability of any casual 'handyman', landscape contractors' quotes to be obtained to lift the six named plants and dispose of four of them, Heather to take the two grasses. The holes to be filled by the contractor with quality topsoil.

The Gardening Group should be offered the opportunity to continue to manage and control the site at least until 30 November 2026, accepting the overseeing of progress and direction by HPC.

As part of the arrangement, Heather to request Roger Gunnett (or other person) to restore and paint/varnish the decaying green woodwork on the Mangelwurzel Chopper owned by Roger, and that he (or other person) maintains both items as required. A timescale should be set for this refurbishment to be carried out by the end of March 2026, before plant growth becomes prolific.

Following the completion of the contractor's removal work, and consequent opening up in viewing the site, the Gardening Group to provide a 'dormant season' outline activity plan for the period to 31 March 2026. This plan to include anticipated support and materials costs, required

from HPC for the period, for review at January's HPC meeting. The plans to be presented by 31 December 2025, or within 14 days of the site work being completed if appropriate.

A further 'spring into summer' outline plan, again with anticipated financial support claims, to be made by the end of March 2026 for the period to the end of August, and then again at the end of August until the end of the gardening year of the site on 30 November.

I am prepared oversee the situation and assess planning and progress during the period.

The situation and future of the site to be reviewed at the HPC meeting in November 2026.

If the Gardening Group decline the proposal, or should HPC defer the decision proposing that the Group continue work at the meeting in November 2025, then the future of the site should be placed as an agenda item for the HPC meeting to be held in January 2026.

Cllr Deryck Watson - 15 November 2025

Minute 25/292

HOLCOT PARISH COUNCIL		(8,144)		885		0	
Payments (VAT incl)		Budget FY25/26		Current Forecast FY25/26		Budget FY26/27	
Administration and communications	Website	(100)	+	(300)	+	(400)	
	Newsletter	(700)		(700)	+	(750)	
	Annual Parish meeting/Chair's expenses	0		0		0	
	External Audit	0		0		0	
	Memberships	(850)	-	(730)	+	(850)	
	Election (Earmarked reserve in FY24/25)	(1,200)	-	(220)	-	0	
	Room Hire	(150)		(150)		(150)	
	Admin - general	(300)		(300)	+	(315)	
	Parish clerk and Councillor training	(500)		(500)		(500)	
	Commission charges - Bank	(72)		(72)		(72)	
	TOTALS	(3,872)	-	(2,972)	+	(3,037)	
Maintenance	Mowing	(6,000)		(6,000)	+	(6,300)	
	General maintenance	(1,000)	-	(500)	+	(1,500)	
	Playing field	(250)	+	(2,000)		(2,000)	
	Friends of Holcot - general	(350)		(350)	-	0	
	Defibrillators	(200)		(200)	+	(300)	
	TOTALS	(7,800)	+	(9,050)	+	(10,100)	
Projects	Road Safety Fund (earmarked reserve)	(10,000)	-	(1)	+	(201)	
	Holcot Hotspot	(200)		(200)		(200)	
	General Projects Fund	(1,000)		(1,000)		(1,000)	
		0		0		0	
		0		0		0	
	TOTALS	(11,200)	-	(1,201)	+	(1,401)	
Lighting	Discretionary improvement	0		0			
	Routine maintenance, electricity	(1,600)		(1,600)		(1,600)	
	TOTALS	(1,600)		(1,600)		(1,600)	
Other	Insurance	(700)		(700)	+	(750)	
	Allotment	(250)		(250)		(250)	
	TOTALS	(950)		(950)	+	(1,000)	
S137 and sundry	Grants	(3,000)		(3,000)		(3,000)	
	Poppy Wreath	(30)		(30)		(30)	
	TOTALS	(3,030)		(3,030)		(3,030)	
Staff costs	Clerk Salary	(5,500)	-	(5,380)	+	(6,050)	
	Working from home allowance	0	+	(120)		(120)	
	Payroll Admin	0	+	(120)		(120)	
	TOTALS	(5,500)	+	(5,620)	+	(6,290)	
Payments - Total cashflow		(33,952)	-	(24,423)	+	(26,458)	
Receipts							
	Precept	22,250		22,250	+	23,400	Increase
	Mowing grant	808		808		808	
	VAT refund	2,500	-	2,000		2,000	
	WNC Grant	0		0		0	
	Allotment reimbursement	250		250		250	
	Other fundraising and minor Receipts	0		0		0	
		0		0		0	
		0		0		0	
Receipts - Total cashflow		25,808	-	25,308	+	26,458	