**WOODLAND PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of Meeting held on**

**Thursday 11 September 2025**

**at**

**Woodland Village Hall**

**Present**

Cllr Hall (Chair), Cllr Timms, Cllr Snowdon, Cllr Blackwood, Cllr Gardner, Cllr Abbott, David Buckee (Parish Clerk)

3 members of the public were present

**1. Apologies**

Cllr Peckett, Cllr Robert Potts (DCC Evenwood and Barony)

**2. Declaration of Interest**

**(Members are asked to consider if they have a conflict of interest either personally or pecuniary in any matter included within the agenda)**

None declared

**3. Acceptance and signing of minutes from meeting 10th July 2025**

Draft minutes have already been sent to Councillors, who agreed to accept them in full. Proposed by Cllr Gardner, seconded by Cllr Timms. Minutes of the meeting signed by Cllr Hall.

**4. Matters Arising**

None

**5. Finance and Financial update**

The Clerk reported the bank account balance is currently £11,000.22. Since the last meeting we have paid out £90 internal auditor, £105.60 ROSPA inspection, £20.76 VJ Day food, £40 CDALC (social media training for Cllrs Timms/Gardner), £325 grass cutting. Monies paid in £43.30 monies collected from VJ Day donations, matched by a further £43.30 from Woodland Village Hall. Monies to be paid out £86.60 to Royal British Legion from VJ Day donations, and £2.57 postage costs.

The clerk stated that since starting the role in September 2024, no salary payments have yet been made or requested. This has been partly due to help with the expected pressure on Parish Council finances to pay the VAT element of the play equipment upfront prior to reclaiming it from HMRC, and secondly due to the need to set up a payroll and register the Parish Council as an employer. Total salary payment due since September 2024 is approximately £2k

There has been a delay in reclaiming the second instalment of VAT, due to issues in trying to match a Government Gateway ID with VAT customer reference number to allow a claim to be submitted online, and despite various telephone conversations with HMRC this has still not been resolved. A manual paper application has now been submitted to HMRC to reclaim VAT totalling £4,514.22 and it is expected that this will take around 60 days to be received.

Whilst the current bank balance looks fairly healthy, once allowances are taken in to account for payment of election costs (circa £3k) when received, a reserve required to be held of £5k, and clerk back salary due £2k, there would only remain around £1k in ‘spendable’ monies until the VAT monies have been received.

The Clerk has agreed with Councillors to split outstanding salary due, with 6 months payments £969.84 (Sept 24 to Feb 25) payable now, and the balance of £995.64 (March 25 to Aug 25) to be paid in November together with Sept/Oct 25 salary pay, assuming VAT monies have been received by then. Thereafter salary to be paid every 2 months, agreed at Parish Council meetings.

Councillors agreed to look at a savings account to ring fence the £5k reserve the PC has to retain, and once the VAT monies have been received and the election costs paid, to then start making allowances in anticipation of future elections, thereby keeping earmarked monies separate from the working account. This will give a truer picture of the Parish Council monies available to spend on day-to-day items. ACTION: Clerk to look at savings account options.

Parish Councils are covered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS), so that monies held are protected should the Bank run in to financial difficulties.

**6. Playpark**

Cllr Abbott reported that the wood at the top of the slide has now been replaced, which will stop the potential for fingers to be trapped, and the wooden uprights on the climbing frame have been sanded and painted. There have been no further signs of vandalism to the play equipment, and there has been no sign of littering.

In light of there being no further incidents of damage, Councillors agreed that inspections be reduced from weekly to fortnightly.

Engineers from Playdale are due to visit w/c 15th September to rectify issues with some ‘loose’ brackets on the new equipment identified in the ROSPA inspection, as well as putting in some longer bolts in the hammock.

Cllr Gardner has been storing the old litter bin and bench that were removed when the new play equipment was installed. Councillors agreed that there was no need to put the old bin back, and if in future there is the need for another bin, there are 2 currently in store in the cemetery chapel. When the bench was removed by the contractors, the legs were sawn off, so the bench is little use unless new legs are welded on. Councillors felt that this was not a particularly viable option and agreed to scrap the two items. ACTION: Cllr Gardner to arrange.

Councillors discussed the possibility of fundraising for a new low maintenance polycarbonate bench, or perhaps see if anyone wanted to donate a memorial bench. Also discussed whether there is a need to have a second bench in the playpark. Cllr Snowdon suggested an alternative of a ‘backless’ seat. Agreed initially to see if anyone would want to donate/sponsor a bench. ACTION: Cllr Gardner to obtain idea of costs of a new bench and then to put on Facebook to see if there were any willing sponsors/donors. ACTION: Clerk to see if there are any residual monies from the fundraising monies/grants that were received for the play equipment, which could be used towards the cost of a new bench.

CCTV – as there have been no further incidences of vandalism, Councillors agreed to shelve the possible installation of CCTV in the play park.

The Clerk has written to Lynesack & Softley Parish Council asking for a contribution towards the increased cost of running and maintaining the playpark, which is used by children from their parish, and this is to be discussed by councillors at their next meeting.

**7. Speeding traffic**

Following recent incidents near the school caused through speeding, the Clerk at Lynesack & Softley approached DCC, and has heard back that they see no issues in having temporary 20mph speed signs, although no timescales have been given.

Cllr Blackwood has drawn up a petition to see if residents were in favour of speed humps through the village, and will start approaching residents next week, starting initially with the school. We are waiting to hear from Lynesack & Softley whether they are happy for us to canvass views of residents of Woodland which fall within their parish.

Cllr Gardner mentioned the idea of white gates at the entrances/exits to the village, similar to the ones at Kinninvie, which are felt to draw attention more to the speed signs, and that she has been given the impression that if the PC decided to look at this as an alternative, then funding is probably likely to be available.

**8. Litter pick**

As it is now some time since the last litter pick, Cllr Timms felt that it would be a good idea to do another one before winter, and suggested 28th September starting at 10.30am. We still have litter pickers, bags and hi-viz on loan from DCC. ACTION: Cllr Timms to advertise on Facebook page.

**9. Public participation**

A member of the public said that they were happy to hear that there has been no further incidence of damage in the playpark, and that as a consequence the decision has been taken to shelve CCTV.

**10. Planning**

A planning application has been submitted for a 5kW wind turbine on a 12m mast at Cairns House Farm, including concrete foundations and underground cable between the tower and house. For reference, this is similar to the other two already in the village. Councillors had no objection to this planning application.

**11. Clerk’s matters – correspondence received**

Correspondence – a member of the public had raised a query regarding whether there was to be a public consultation for CCTV at the playpark. Response sent that CCTV was to be discussed at this meeting and they were welcome to attend.

VJ Day – the event was well attended, and Louise & Dec Newton wished to thank all those involved in organising it.

Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) – we are still waiting to hear back from the external auditor, but it should be received any time as there is a deadline of 30th September for it to be completed.

Remembrance Sunday – Councillors agreed for a wreath to be ordered from Royal British Legion. ACTION: Clerk to organise. Cllr Gardner mentioned that the poppy display created by Natterers group, which was displayed at VJ Day, can be on display again in the village hall, which will be open as it was last year for refreshments before/during/after the service at the war memorial, with a collection for Royal British Legion. ACTION: Clerk to contact the vicar at Evenwood to find out timings for the service to take place in Woodland. ACTION: Cllr Gardner to find out the exact period that Tommy should be displayed at the memorial.

Cllr Snowdon raised the issue of the cemetery chapel. Whilst there has still been nothing uncovered to show that the PC legally owns the chapel, indications so far are that it probably does. Pending further investigations, Cllr Snowdon asked about the missing ridge tile. With the imminent onset of bad weather, Councillors agreed to arrange a repair of the missing tile and possible capping of the chimney, to save further deterioration to the chapel. A discussion took place regarding the future of the chapel, which it was unanimously agreed the Parish Council cannot afford to maintain. Cllr Abbott mentioned discussions he had recently with DCC records office, where it was intimated that the understanding was that the cemeteries department had responsibility for the chapel as well as the cemetery itself. ACTION: Clerk to draft a letter to DCC to ascertain their understanding of who has responsibility for the chapel, mentioning that the Parish Council has insufficient monies from its limited precept to maintain the building.

Banking arrangements – a discussion took place regarding whether any updates are required to the current banking arrangements, both for online banking and for the mandate. Councillors present were happy to continue with the current arrangements, which are in line with our Financial Regulations, and which were felt to be practical on a day-to-day basis, as well as providing protection against misuse of monies held. ACTION: Clerk to investigate whether SMS text alerts can be set up to notify any bank account transactions, to add another layer of protection.

**Date of next meeting**

Next meeting provisionally agreed for Thursday 13th November 2025 at Woodland Village Hall, with anything urgent in the meantime being communicated by email.

Meeting closed 8.45pm

*These are true and accurate minutes of the meeting as agreed by the council*

**Date ………………………………………..**

**Signed ……………………………………..**

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