

# MINUTES

COUNCIL

THURSDAY, 22 SEPTEMBER 2022

1.00 PM



SOUTH  
KESTEVEN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL

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## PRESENT

Councillor Helen Crawford Chairman  
Councillor Gloria Johnson Vice-Chairman

Councillor David Bellamy  
Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing  
Councillor Pam Bosworth  
Councillor Robert Broughton  
Councillor George Chivers  
Councillor Louise Clack  
Councillor Richard Cleaver  
Councillor Kelham Cooke  
Councillor John Cottier  
Councillor John Dawson  
Councillor Phil Dilks  
Councillor Richard Dixon-Warren  
Councillor Barry Dobson  
Councillor Paul Fellows  
Councillor Ben Green  
Councillor Jan Hansen  
Councillor Graham Jeal  
Councillor Gloria Johnson  
Councillor Anna Kelly  
Councillor Jane Kingman  
Councillor Philip Knowles  
Councillor Nikki Manterfield

Councillor Annie Mason  
Councillor Penny Milnes  
Councillor Charmaine Morgan  
Councillor Kaffy Rice-Oxley  
Councillor Nick Robins  
Councillor Penny Robins  
Councillor Susan Sandall  
Councillor Ian Selby  
Councillor Lee Steptoe  
Councillor Judy Stevens  
Councillor Rosemary Trollope-Bellew  
Councillor Sarah Trotter  
Councillor Dean Ward  
Councillor Hannah Westropp  
Councillor Hilary Westropp  
Councillor Amanda Wheeler  
Councillor Mark Whittington  
Councillor Jane Wood  
Councillor Paul Wood  
Councillor Sue Woolley  
Councillor Linda Wootten  
Councillor Ray Wootten

## OFFICERS

Karen Bradford, Chief Executive  
Alan Robinson, Deputy Chief Executive (Monitoring Officer)  
Andrew Cotton, Director of Housing and Property  
Nicola McCoy-Brown, Director of Growth and Culture  
Richard Wyles, Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer)  
Emma Whittaker, Assistant Director of Planning  
Chris Prime, Communications Manager

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James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager  
Patrick Astill, Communications Officer  
Jordan Brooks, IT Helpdesk Engineer  
Lucy Bonshor, Democratic Officer  
Louise Field, Executive Assistant to the Leader of the Council

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### **37. Public Open Forum**

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, the Chairman of the Council invited a minute's silence to remember Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Following the minute's silence, the Chairman along with Councillors Phil Dilks, Kelham Cooke, Mark Whittington, Ian Selby, Susan Sandall, Charmaine Morgan, Paul Wood and Lee Steptoe shared their memories of the Late Queen.

The Chairman of the Council then invited members to hold a further minute's silence for the late Councillor Judy Smith. Following the minute's silence, The Chairman, Councillors Kelham Cooke, Paul Wood, Paul Fellowes, Philip Knowles, Linda Wootten, Ian Selby, Phil Dilks and Charmaine Morgan all paid tribute to Councillor Smith.

No members of the public had registered to speak as part of the public open forum.

### **38. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor Ashley Baxter  
Councillor Breda-Rae Griffin  
Councillor Rosemary Kaberry-Brown  
Councillor Virginia Moran  
Councillor Robert Reid  
Councillor Adam Stokes  
Councillor Ian Stokes  
Councillor Jill Thomas

### **39. Disclosure of Interests**

No interests were disclosed.

### **40. Minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2022**

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2022 were proposed, seconded and **AGREED** as a correct record.

#### **41. Communications (including Chairman's Announcements)**

The Council noted the Chairman's engagements which had been circulated at the meeting, for information.

The Chairman thanked those members that had been present at the Civic Service on Sunday 4 September.

The Chairman also highlighted that she had been present at St. Wulfram's Church, Grantham for a remembrance service for Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

The Leader of the Council noted his pride at how South Kesteven District Council had worked throughout the national period of mourning, and highlighted the following pieces of work:

- Supporting the books of condolence in Bourne, Market Deeping, Grantham and Stamford;
- The organisation of the floral tributes; and;
- The Operation London Bridge team and the mayoral teams of Bourne, Market Deeping, Grantham and Stamford for their work throughout the period of mourning. This included the management of the proclamation in the four towns.

The Head of Paid Service informed members of the appointment of temporary Councillors to Hough on the Hill Parish Council.

Hough on the Hill Parish Council had recently received resignations from all of its members and was no longer quorate. Where a Parish Council was inquorate and unable to operate, the District Council could make temporary appointments to enable the Parish Council to progress urgent business. The making of temporary appointments to Town and Parish Councils was delegated to the Chief Executive and any appointments were required to be reported to the next meeting of Council for information. Members were advised that the Chief Executive had used these powers to make three temporary appointments to Hough on the Hill Parish Council - Councillor Penny Milnes, Councillor Paul Wood and County Councillor Alexander Maughan - until three new Parish Councillors had been elected or co-opted and taken up office.

#### **42. Horbling Conservation Area**

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Planning Policy presented a report considering the potential designation of the Horbling Conservation Area and the adoption of the Horbling Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.

The Cabinet Member outlined to members that designating the Conservation Area would recognise the special interests of Horbling. The boundaries of the Conservation Area were defined in the map appended to the report in the agenda pack.

The Cabinet Member ended the introduction by highlighting that the Conservation Area would allow greater protection for the character of the geographical area and would protect important features. The Cabinet Member placed on record his thanks to officers within the Planning team for compiling the report.

The following points were highlighted during debate:

- The original consultation for Horbling Conservation Area took place in 2018. A further consultation was carried out due to omissions in the 2018 iteration;
- There would be a reputational risk to SKDC if the special qualities of Horbling Conservation Area were not monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis;
- The boundaries of Horbling Conservation Area appeared unusual and did not match the current footprint of the village; this was because the Conservation Area was there to conserve the older parts of the village and not new build properties.

Having been proposed and seconded, upon being taken to the vote the motion was **AGREED**.

#### **DECISION:**

##### **That Full Council:**

- 1. Approves the formal designation of the Horbling Conservation Area boundary as shown in Appendix C to the report.**
  - 2. Approves the adoption of the Horbling Conservation Area Appraisal, as part of the Development Plan evidence base and as a material planning consideration; and**
  - 3. Delegates the decision making to the Assistant Director of Planning to make minor changes, typographical corrections or non-material amendments to the Horbling Conservation Area Appraisal and associated documents prior to formal publication and to undertake the necessary statutory actions to implement agreed recommendations.**
- 43. Political Proportionality, Allocation of Committee Seats and appointment of Armed Forces Lead Member**

A report of the Chief Executive was considered which reported the revised political balance of the Council and allocation of seats to committees following a change to one of the political groups on the Council.

The report also proposed the appointment of Councillor Richard Dixon-Warren to the role of Lead Member for the Armed Forces.

The Leader of the Opposition moved that Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing be added as a member to the vacant seat for the Independent Group on Companies Committee.

The motions were proposed and seconded en bloc. Upon being taken to the vote the motions were **AGREED**.

#### **DECISION:**

##### **That Full Council:**

- 1. Notes the revised political proportionality and allocation of seats to Committees.**
- 2. Approves the appointment of Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing from the Independent Group to the vacant seat on the Companies Committee.**
- 3. Approves the appointment of Councillor Phil Dilks from the Alliance SK Group on the Licensing Committee and Alcohol, Entertainment and Late Night Refreshment Licensing Committee.**
- 4. Approves the appointment of Councillor Richard Dixon-Warren as the Council's Lead Member for the Armed Forces.**

#### **44. Members' Open Questions**

##### Question 1 – Councillor Jan Hansen to the Leader of the Council

Councillor Hansen asked the Leader of the Council whether he would agree to hold a meeting with Horbling Parish Council to discuss the Horbling Conservation Area.

The Leader of the Council agreed to be involved in a meeting with Horbling Parish Council and extended the invite to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Planning Policy.

##### Question 2 – Councillor Paul Wood to the Leader of the Council

Councillor Paul Wood noted the six-month review that had recently been undertaken following the Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge and asked the Leader of the Council for feedback.

The Leader explained to members that there had been a six-month review held by the members of the Peer Review Panel. A report was due back in three weeks' time and the details of this would be reported back to Full Council. The Panel were impressed with both the officer and political improvements since their last visit and noted significant progress across a number of areas of the Council.

### Question 3 – Councillor Phil Dilks to the Cabinet Member for Culture and Visitor Economy

Councillor Dilks congratulated the villages of Ropsley and Welby for their recent success in South Kesteven District Council's Best Kept Village competition. He asked the Cabinet member why Deeping St. James had been banned from the competition and requested assurance that the ban would be lifted.

In reply, the Cabinet Member congratulated all of those villages that had had success in the competition and gave a special mention to those that had received a gold bin. The Cabinet Member highlighted to members that she had inherited responsibility for the Best Kept Village competition from a previous Cabinet Member. The competition was being reviewed and further information would be provided to members when available.

### Question 4 – Councillor Chairmaine Morgan to the Leader of the Council

Councillor Morgan highlighted the national cost of living issue and asked for an explanation of why the subject was not included on the agenda for this meeting, how the Council would manage the issue, and whether an extraordinary meeting could be considered.

The Leader of the Council highlighted that the issue was part of the agenda for the postponed Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 5 October 2022. Additionally, the Cabinet Member for People and Safer Communities had held a number of working group meetings on this topic.

The Leader of the Council informed members that the cost of living was a priority; the Council was working with a number of community groups across the district. The issue, and the finances around it would also be discussed at the Finance, Economic Development and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**Note:** Councillor Kaffy Rice-Oxley left the Chamber and did not return.

### Question 5 – Councillor Lee Steptoe to the Leader of the Council

Councillor Steptoe queried when a bidding based letting system would be introduced for the Council's housing stock.

The Leader of the Council asked for clarification from the Director of Housing and Property, who responded that the timeline would be shared with all members in due course. Currently, his team were looking at IT packages that would allow a choice-based letting system to work.

### Question 6 – Councillor Philip Knowles to the Cabinet Member for Waste Services and Climate Change

Councillor Knowles requested an update on the progress of the grounds maintenance contract.

The Cabinet Member informed members that there would be a Joint Meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee to discuss the continuation of grounds maintenance. There were three options to consider; private providers, in-house provision, or retaining service provision through EnvironmentSK Ltd. Once the options had been discussed at the Joint Meeting, a report would be put to the appropriate decision makers.

### Question 7 – Councillor Anna Kelly to the Leader of the Council

Councillor Kelly asked for an update on the Scrutiny Review and asked whether an action plan had been formulated.

The Leader of the Council and the Deputy Chief Executive outlined that a draft action plan was on the agenda for Governance and Audit Committee to consider on 28 September 2022.

### Question 8 – Councillor Ian Selby to the Leader of the Council

Councillor Selby asked whether communication with the general public could be improved as he had heard several comments from constituents remarking that the standard of communication from officers was poor.

The Leader of the Council replied requesting evidence for this statement, as residents were communicated with on a daily basis across a range of departments and issues. Other work, such as the South Kesteven magazine, and the upcoming Communications Strategy demonstrated officer commitment to good communication with residents.

## **45. Notices of Motion**

### **(a) Councillor Amanda Wheeler**

Councillor Amanda Wheeler proposed the following motion, which had been amended from the printed version available in the agenda pack with the consent of Council. The original wording had been replaced with the following:

#### *Cost of Living*

*Ofgem increased the energy price cap by 50% in April this year and had proposed increasing the typical household energy bill further to £3,549 from October.*

*It is noted that the government has now proposed that the household energy bill will be £2,500 from October giving a saving of around £1,000 p.a.*

*As well as energy bills, food and fuel prices have increased substantially, and inflation is currently running at 10% and expected to rise.*

*All of this is putting increasing pressure on family budgets, and it is important that the Council do all it can to help its residents.*

*The Council therefore:*

- 1. pledges to improve communication of Housing Benefit and Council Tax support schemes for those on low incomes in order to ensure those who are entitled to additional support are receiving it.*
- 2. resolves to organise a local “Cost of Living Working Group” with key groups including Citizens’ Advice, food banks, local community and business groups and Town and Parish Councils. This is to discuss how it can best support its residents through this current crisis and use its influence and resources to create positive change.*

In introducing the motion, Councillor Wheeler stressed that it was important that the Council did all it could to support local residents with the cost of living by working with local organisations; for example Citizen’s Advice. Examples of the current issues given by Citizen’s Advice were:

- increased calls to the service;
- an increase in food bank referrals and support with energy bills.

Councillor Wheeler highlighted the hard work of the food banks in the Deepings, Bourne, Stamford and Grantham, as well as commending charities, community groups, churches, and officers at the Council.

A dedicated page on the Council’s website had been created to draw all the resources together that assisted with the cost of living, to ensure residents and businesses had a central point of information. Councillor Wheeler re-affirmed that the original motion included in the agenda pack had been amended to ensure cross-party support.

The Chairman of the Council seconded the motion and invited members to debate. The following points were raised during debate:

- The cost of living was already a national emergency and there would be a fiscal event held by the government; it was hoped this event would address some of cost of living issues;
- A Cost of Living Strategic Working Group had already been set up and was chaired by the Cabinet Member for People and Safer Communities. It met on a weekly basis and was supported by a team of Senior Managers; invites were



also extended to external stakeholders from public, private and voluntary sector organisations;

- It was noted that not all residents would have internet access, and therefore would not be able to access the cost of living webpage. It was likely therefore that word of mouth updates, through Town and Parish Councils would be important to reach these individuals;
- Cost of living 'support events' would be planned in the Deepings, Stamford, Bourne and Grantham, supported by a range of external stakeholders. Further information would be provided at the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny meeting on 5 October 2022;
- Emotional wellbeing and mental health concerns were paramount, and it would be important to link in cost of living work with the Mental Health Working Group;
- Those residents that were not accessing support that they were otherwise entitled to would be contacted by officers;
- The cost of living was something that would not just affect those vulnerable members of society, it would also touch those on middle incomes. One of the ways in which the Council could provide help was through the use of a 'hub';
- When calling on the help of local charities in the district it would be important that this help was not piecemeal and was available to all, not just those in the towns where the charities were based;
- Cost of living updates would be reported back publicly to the Finance, Economic Development and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- The Council had an Employment Committee that looked after the welfare of staff, in addition to the People Panel, which contained staff representatives from all departments of the Council. The People Panel gave staff the opportunity to raise concerns to senior members of staff and members.

Upon being put to the vote, the motion was **AGREED**.

#### **46. Close of meeting**

The meeting closed at 2:39pm.