

BILLINGBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 12 May 2026 at the Sports Pavilion in the Recreation Ground.

Present: Cllrs C. Woodhead (Chairman), M Turner, H Middlebrook, A Volanakis.

In attendance: Mrs. H Beaver (Clerk), and 10 members of the public, and C Cllr M Hill

The Chairman opened the meeting at 6.00pm.

1. Welcome from the Chairman

01. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending and advised them that the meeting is recorded.

2. Approve draft minutes of the meeting held 13 May 2025.

02. It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes as circulated were a true copy and the Chairman signed the minutes. 3. **Chairman's Annual Report**

03. Chairman's Report 12th May 2026

It's my pleasure to present my report and reflect on what has been another productive & purposeful year for our Parish Council, whose aim is to always work to maintain and improve our community. Thankfully it was a year free from flooding like we experienced in January 2025 that caused so much devastation and heartache.

The flooding of January 25 highlighted problems and deficits in our drainage systems and while there is still work to be done to fully address these, it's been amazing to see the progress that's already been made and continues to be made by Billingborough Flood Group (BFG) in addressing these issues. So thanks go to them for their dedication, continued hard work and commitment in liaising with the relevant agencies and authorities to address these problems. The flooding further highlighted the need for an Emergency Group to be formed to deal with such issues and I'm very pleased to say that we now have such a group, run by the village **NOT** the Council. The committee have recruited several volunteers but more are always welcome, so if you're interested please contact Rob on **07972 383257** or at hifivephoto@gmail.com.

We now also have three telemetry early warning devices, in three different locations around the village which monitor water levels in real time giving advance warning of any possible flooding. Although they do not prevent flooding, the alerts would allow our community to prepare, should a flood be a possibility.

Our total income for the year was **£37,310** including our precept of **£19,500** and our total expenditure was **£48,621 net of VAT**. Although our expenditure exceeded our income the Council's finances remain in a sound and stable position, as we have reserves, so there is no cause for concern. However; it remains important that we continue to manage public funds carefully and responsibly. With this in mind, we will continue to actively seek grant funding opportunities to support any future projects or refurbishments to help minimise the impact

on the parish. I assure you that we will always do our utmost to ensure that the budget, i.e. **YOUR** money is used wisely and appropriately and that any expenditure offers best value. Our expenditure for the year was mainly on day to day running costs, which have escalated considerably and maintenance with our only capital spend being the necessary replacement of the paving in the recreation ground. As usual our full accounts can be viewed on our website.

So what are the main things we've been doing? – Our principal focus has been on the proposed redevelopment of our recreation ground – “The Aveland Hub - Sports & Heritage Park” a project that represents a significant investment in its future and the wellbeing of all ages. Considerable time has gone into moving this project forward ready for consultation with you and I'd like to thank Ari for all his hard work in respect to this. The consultation is open until the end of June, so if you haven't already taken part PLEASE DO – as it's your opportunity to help ensure the development reflects **what the community wants** not the council.

Alongside this we have also continued to work towards the long awaited improvements to the cemetery entrance, which will provide a more fitting access. We anticipate that these improvements will be completed later this year. We've also installed the plaque in memory of Queen Elizabeth II & thanks to our persistence the complete boundary fence of Low St paddock was replaced. We facilitated The Flood Pod, which was a very informative event, carried out monument stability testing, developed our wild flower patch, which is currently in bloom & looking glorious & developed a new Councillor Induction Resource pack.

Outstanding matters unfortunately, we still have no date as to when our pavements will be updated, just assurances that they will. We've been advised that the pavement between Billingborough & Sempringham will be renewed this year but no date as to when. We will of course continually chase these up. We & the school continued to endeavour to recruit a school traffic attendant but unfortunately still no one has applied for the role. It will be so sad if lack of interest results in the loss of this funding, as it took a lot of time & hard work to secure it. We are still awaiting the confirmation of the registration of our unregistered land and have been advised that this should be confirmed in June, we're still no further forward re the installation by SKDC of EVCP's in our village, though we will continue to pursue this aim.

Unfortunately the development of the old Aveland School site still remains at standstill, consequently, we still only have use of the land via a licence and our request to LCC re a possible refund for the cost of the grass cutting we paid for over the 8 years prior to them taking over responsibility for cutting it, didn't get a response, despite us vigorously pursuing the matter.

Fortunately we don't really have any problems in the village apart from disrespectful, irresponsible dog walkers that just don't think it's necessary to clean up after their dog has done its business. All pleas to them to be considerate have had no effect. So I ask if you have any constructive suggestions on how this issue can be best addressed or resolved, then the Parish Council would love to hear from you.

As usual throughout the year Councillors and volunteers have worked diligently on behalf of the parish, always with the aim of improving and maintaining the area we call home, so I'd like to take this opportunity to thank:-

Our five councillors - we should be a Council of nine - we started the year with seven but we are now five as Julie & Andy left us. I'd like to take this opportunity to say a **big thank you** to them all for all their hard work and dedication and to you I say why not consider **joining us – as we have 4 vacancies?** Mull it over – it's your opportunity to help shape your village!

Dave & Judith for looking after our village entry planters.

Dave – our unofficial odd job man.

All those that help in our church **Trevor** our Church Warden, **Judith & Kim** for the brass cleaning, **Karen** for her amazing floral displays, **Rebecca** for winding up the clock, **all those** that clean, **Kevin** for odd jobs & churchyard tidying, **Rex & Angie** for looking after the boarders and anyone else that quietly contributes.

To all that made poppies for or created our magnificent poppy display.

BAGS - for managing the allotments on our behalf.

The **Cricket Club** for providing a sporting opportunity within the village and lending a hand to the Council with odd jobs.

The **Village Hall Committee** for managing the hall and working diligently to raise funds to maintain and improve it and for organising events that foster community cohesion.

BATS – for keeping us entertained, while raising funds for the village hall.

The **Community Gym committee** for managing the gym and ensuring it's continued viability.

All that help deliver the weekly '**Pop in Too**' coffee/lunch session.

Susan – for running **Village Pals**

Linkwell – whose volunteers provide assistance to those who may at times need a little extra help.

The **Scouts** and the **Army Cadets** for providing the opportunity for our young people to explore and experience different things.

We are very fortunate to have so many amazing people that give their time for the benefit of our community? Truly unsung heroes!

My thanks and appreciation for all their hard work also goes to **Kim** our dedicated community village cleaner, **Mark** our recreation ground caretaker, to **Jane** and **Jon** our cemetery caretaking team and to **Karen** our Spring Wells guardian. All of whom do an incredible job! **Thank You!!**

Finally but certainly not least, I say thanks to our **Clerk and RFO Hayley** for her continued professionalism, dedication and hard work throughout the year. Her support, guidance and

tireless efforts behind the scenes are invaluable to the smooth running of the council. She goes above and beyond her job description to ensure that the council runs smoothly and the village gets best value. **Thanks Hayley you're truly a star!!**

My closing words are as always to remind you that this is your village so please do let us know what you'd like to see being developed or initiated, what we could do better or what we've done well. We are your representatives, here to serve you and will always endeavour to do our best for you. However; we can't change or do something if we don't know about it, so please do let us know your ideas and opinions. ***They are always very welcome!***

4. Receive reports from the County and District Councils, if present.

04.C Cllr Hill reported that the consultants carrying out flood mitigation work on behalf of LCC had incurred additional works to ascertain the exact condition of the drainage systems, hence their report will not be received as soon as previously thought. He noted that the old Grimer's yard site is now virtually empty, and although planning permission had been sought some years ago to develop the site, it was no longer on the future plan for development. As Reform were now leading the County Council, Cllr Hill commented that things were much as they were before at present, although Social Care was still a concern. He highlighted the issue of a shortage of volunteer firefighters and reminded residents that if eligible, they could apply for a £300 grant towards the cost of heating oil. There was also concern about the industrialisation of farming land in the County. Locally, he had managed to get the 30mph speed limit towards Birthorpe from Birthorpe Rd extended a little. There should be a £3k grant available from the County Council shortly for certain projects around the ward. Cllr Hill confirmed that the Archers speed camera had been applied for. He was asked again about the possibility of Highways repairing the roadway near the doctors, before the Spring Wells and stated that this had been reported and was on the list.

05. District Cllr Turner reported that on a personal level he had been very involved in setting up the Billingborough Flood Group he thanked his fellow members of that group and said that had been much of his focus over the last year. Regarding his role as District Cllr, in general the new bin collections were going well, however anyone having issues should email him directly as he could help with this. He reported that the new waste depot was now open. Although there had been some slight changes within the membership of SKDC recently, it was still a multi-party cabinet and consensus in decision making was encouraged. The final outcome of the Local Government Reorganisation was still not known but in ordered for the 2027 elections to go ahead a decision was really needed by July, with an Act of Parliament needed by September. A new Community Grant fund of £200k was available at a maximum amount of £5k per application.

5. Receive reports from Community Groups and Organisations.

06. Village Hall Committee Member Susan Williams read out the following report from the Village Hall committee:

07. Krys Sokarlow, Chairman of the Billingborough Flood Group gave a report with the following bullet points:

Formation of the BFG

Currently opening a BFG Community Bank Account to enable grant applications

Grant either from Bicker Fund and/or SKDC Community Fund to fund purchase of pumps and other kit for the village for flood mitigation purchases.

As we become more knowledgeable and experienced in flood issues we can develop future projects and as a community group apply for funding towards their costs

Strategic Plan Update – following issue of the comprehensive report published in April 2026

Controlling water west of Billingborough

1. DEFRA Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Funding, - DEFRA have arranged a webinar which we attended today (12th May) which explained in more detail the purpose of funding and qualification.
2. DEFRA are keen that Community Groups (like BFG) lead and develop natural flood management solutions in collaboration with Risk Management Authorities (Like Lincolnshire Lead Flood Authority here in Lincolnshire) as well as Env Agency and Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board.
3. We received a progress update from LLFA regarding the STANTEC consultancy project who have been commissioned by LCC to undertake a detailed investigation into all the high risk catchments (Billingborough is one) into the natural and asset drainage systems in each catchment and are well on with the our investigation and we hope to receive more detailed outcomes within the next 6 months form which we will work with LLFA/EA/IDB to develop natural flood management solutions for holding back and slowing water west of the village and significantly reducing the risk of a repeat of Jan 2026.
4. Based on current information, timelines suggest that by mid 2027 we will have developed proposals ready to present to DEFRA for funding approval. This would mean that we would be targeting implementation by winter 2028.
5. We appreciate that is another two winters but unfortunately we are just part of a wider flooding problem not just in Lincolnshire, but nation wide and the role of the BFG is to fight our corner and raise our profile

Drainage System in and around Billingborough

1. Our main efforts at this stage are to concentrate on Folkingham Rd and Vine Street
2. We held an onsite meeting on the 7th May with LCCV Highways and are currently in discussions with Highways to
 - a. Open up the covered drain opposite No 1 Folkingham Rd for ease of maintenance by the riparian owner. This was an open drain in the past but was covered and piped by the previous homeowner.

- b. To agree a way for the pipe under the railway embankment and under Grimers Yard entrance to be maintained by Highways due to its length and complexity of land ownership.
 - c. To clarify with Highways that the main surface water drainage system that runs out of Blasson Estate has not been maintained since its construction in 2005 by Highways and to confirm that it is Highways responsibility
3. We continue to pressure AW to deal with the blockages on their surface water drains on Vine Street, especially since the collapse of the drain at the end of Station Rd recently which following an inspection of the manhole by the AW engineer and Murray just down from the collapsed drain showed 2 ft of water which further confirms that Vine Street is blocked and will added to flood problems we experienced in Jan 2025.

Removing Flood Water from the Village to the East

- 1. Following further discussions with Crown Estates and the tenant farmer (Andfrew Mair) they plan to clear the Hurn Drain and reinstate the culvert and pipe connecting Cowgate drain before winter 2026.
- 2. We are also negotiating with Crown Estates and Andrew Mair for a bigger diameter pipe to be installed to enable maximum water flow to pump out of Vine Street when we use the pumps during a flooding event.

There will be more updates over the coming months on progress.

- 6. Questions, comments, and proposals from the Public.
 - 08. The Flood Group were asked if the pumps had been purchased yet, which they hadn't.
 - 09 Cllr Volanakis informed the meeting about the vacancies on the Council and encouraged anyone interested to apply. He also informed the meeting about the business plan for the recreation ground and urged everyone to complete the survey that was currently running.
 - 10. A concern about the increased cases of parking on junctions and also parking in prohibited areas was raised. C Cllr Hill explained that parking on a junction was against the Highway Code but was not illegal, he urged the Parish Council to apply to ask for double yellow lines in areas of concern. It was pointed out that pavement parking was also an issue, especially for older residents.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 7.03pm.