

HECK PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF HECK PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 1st July 2025 at 18:30 hrs in HECK PARISH ROOM

Chair: Cllr J Harling

Clerk/RFO: Mr J R Hunter, 4 Grove Park, Calder Grove, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF4 3BZ

E-mail: heckparishcouncil@outlook.com

Present: Cllrs J Harling (Chair); B Coney (Vice Chair), L Watkinson-Teo,
Clerk/RFO: J R Hunter

Agenda items

032501. Welcome

- The Chairman welcomed all present to the meeting.
- A resident representing the newly formed Heck Events Committee presented ideas under consideration for upcoming community events. A significant proposal involved the potential relocation of the village playground from its current site to a more suitable and accessible area at a site owned by the Parish Council adjacent to the Bay Horse Inn. Concerns were raised about the safety of the existing location, which is accessed via a busy road and is situated close to a working quarry and railway line. The committee's intention is to engage with the landlords of the Bay Horse to seek their support and explore possible funding options to facilitate the relocation. An inaugural meeting of the committee is scheduled to take place at the Bay Horse during July. In the interim quotations have been requested from specialist contractors to undertake the dismantle of playground equipment, relocation and installation at the new site. Costs have been quoted in the order of £3,500 before VAT. As an alternative quotation could be sought for new equipment.
- In addition, residents raised concerns regarding the increasing volume and speed of traffic within the village. Councillors discussed potential traffic calming measures, including the possibility of installing speed bumps, and agreed that further exploration of available options was warranted.
- Further concern was raised about dust levels emanating from the Thomas Armstrong industrial site. A resident reported a conversation with an Environmental Health officer who acknowledged that the size of the waste stockpiles may breach planning conditions. The officer indicated that an unannounced inspection would be made to assess compliance, which could result in enforcement action requiring a reduction in stockpile height and the implementation of wheel-washing for site vehicles.

The council welcomed the initiative from the Events Committee and recognised the need for improved safety around the play area. Councillors acknowledged the issues of traffic and dust, and agreed to monitor developments, particularly any enforcement actions resulting from the Environmental Health inspection.

032502. Apologies:

- All councillors were present at the meeting.
- Three members of the public attended the meeting with an interest in understanding the function and responsibilities of the Parish Council, potentially with a view to volunteering as councillors. The Clerk, John Hunter, facilitated introductions and provided a general overview of the council's role, explaining that the council acts as a voice for the community, particularly in response to local issues such as planning and industrial development.
- He emphasised the limitations of a small parish council in terms of financial resources and formal powers, noting that influence is largely exercised through representation and communication rather than direct authority. Key areas currently engaging the council include matters relating to the Thomas Armstrong glass manufacturing facility, the future of the village play area, the proposed sale of Parish-owned land, and street lighting concerns.
- The Clerk explained the implications of recent resignations, leaving the council with two vacancies. He detailed the legal requirements of council operation, highlighting that a minimum of three councillors is necessary for the council to remain quorate and able to make decisions, including financial commitments.
- The process for filling vacancies was outlined: a public notice has been issued advising the community of the vacancies. If ten or more electors request an election by 18th July 2025, one will be arranged. If no such request is made, the council will proceed to fill the vacancies through co-option. The earliest possible date for a co-option meeting would be 2nd September 2025, provided a quorum of at least three councillors is present.
- The council is awaiting the outcome of the notice period to determine whether an election will be required or whether the co-option process can proceed. Attending residents were thanked for their interest and encouraged to remain engaged with the process.

Actions Arising:

- Await the conclusion of the public notice period on 18th July 2025.
- Subject to no election being triggered, prepare for a co-option meeting to be held on 2nd September 2025.
- Ensure a quorum of three councillors is available to attend the co-option meeting if it proceeds.

032503. Public Forum:

- There being no members of the public present at the meeting the Chair closed the public forum.

032504. Minutes of last meeting:

- Councillors resolved to accept the minutes of the Heck Parish Council meeting held on 6th May 2025 as a true record and gave approval to the Chair to sign as acceptance of the minutes for publishing on the Heck Parish Council website.



032505. To receive reports, for information only, from:

- a) District and County Councillor – not present

032506. Planning:

- The clerk advised that there are no further planning applications
- **Thomas Armstrong**, Following comments raised during the open forum, the Clerk reported on a matter relating to the implementation of planning conditions during the construction phase of the Thomas Armstrong site.
- The Environment Agency had expressed serious concerns at the planning stage regarding the risk of excessive dust emissions, particularly from the proposed glass stockpiles. As a result, they requested that a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) be required as a condition of planning approval.
- The CEMP was intended to include specific measures such as vehicle washing facilities, limitations on the use of unmade roads, designated routes for construction traffic, restrictions on stockpile size, and measures to control dust through covering or spraying.
- While a CEMP was subsequently submitted, it failed to include any reference to the size or limits of the stockpiles. Despite this omission, the planning officers approved the discharge of the relevant conditions. This oversight has prevented Environmental Health from effectively monitoring compliance, particularly about dust emissions and the scale of material storage.
- The Clerk advised that a formal request under the Freedom of Information Act could be submitted to the planning authority to seek clarification on why and how the discharge of conditions was approved despite the absence of key information on stockpile height.

The Council acknowledged the procedural failure in the planning process and expressed concern about the resulting limitations in environmental oversight. It was agreed that further investigation into the planning authority's handling of the matter was justified.

032507. RFO's report on closing balances; receipts, and payments:

- a) Current balances: The RFO presented the report on the current financial position and status of Heck Parish Council. Accounts for the financial period up to 1st July 2025 were presented for review. Total income including precept receipts is £4,118 which compares with expenditure to date of £1,980.70 generating a balance of funds at the bank of £12,509.53.

- b) Payments to be made at the meeting:

Date	Chq No	Payee	Amount
01/07/2025	BACS	J R Hunter Clerk Salary Month 2 – 2025/26	115.20
01/07/2025	BACS	HMRC – PAYE Month 2	28.80
01/07/2025	BACS	J R Hunter Clerk Salary Month 03– 2025/26	115.20
01/07/2025	BACS	HMRC – PAYE Month 03	28.80



c) Payments made between meetings:

Date	Payee	Amount
30/05/2025	British Gas	26.94
01/06/2025	Scottish Water	24.88
04/06/2025	Bank charges	8.00
20/06/2025	British Gas	27.83
01/07/2025	Zurich Insurance	933.78

The retrospective payments were approved by the Council

d) Payments received: 30/04/2025 North Yorkshire Council Precept £4,000.00

e) Rental Receipts: 31/07/2025 – Allotment Rental - £18.00

f) Councillors pointed out that Zurich Insurance should be notified of the installation of a second defibrillator for the village.

Action: Clerk to advise insurance brokers of the acquisition of a new defibrillator.

g) The Clerk reported on progress made following an action from the previous council meeting to investigate the feasibility of installing a water meter at the village hall. Contact had been made with Yorkshire Water, who recommended an on-site inspection by an engineer to determine whether installation is viable. Yorkshire Water advised that the installation cost would be £130. Given the hall's infrequent use, the installation of a meter could result in cost savings by eliminating fixed water charges. A provisional site visit has been arranged for 8th July 2025 between 14:00 and 16:00 hours.

The Council noted the potential financial benefit of the proposal and welcomed the forthcoming inspection.

Actions Arising: Cllr Harling to attend the village hall to accompany the Yorkshire Water engineer during the inspection on 8th July.

h) The Council considered the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) and Accounting Statement (Section 2). Councillors noted that the Internal Audit Report had not been received and that approval of the AGAR was therefore being given before completion of the internal audit process. The Internal Audit will be considered by the Council at the earliest opportunity following its receipt.

Action: The Annual Governance Statement (section 1) and Accounting Statement (section 2) to be signed by the Chair and the Responsible Financial Officer as required and a copy published on the Heck Parish Council website

- i) The council resolved that the period of exercise of public rights shall commence on 2nd July 2025 and end on 12th August 2025 and the Responsible Financial Officer be authorised to publish the required notice and associated documents.

032508. Correspondence received since last meeting: *For information only unless states otherwise.*

- a) The Clerk advised that there was no correspondence received relevant to matters of concern to the Parish Council.

032509. To receive information on the following ongoing issues and decide further action where necessary:

032509.1 Environmental Health Issues and concerns in the Parish – nothing of issue to report apart from the levels of dust generated from the Thomas Armstrong site

032509.2 HGV & Traffic Issues: Councillors raised ongoing concerns about the volume and nature of traffic passing through the village, particularly the number of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) parking in and around the area in advance of early morning departures, typically around 7:00 am. The situation is compounded by developments at the Biomass site, which is currently consulting on plans to expand operations to a 24/7 schedule.

Councillors expressed strong concern that round-the-clock operation would have a serious negative impact on residential amenity, especially due to increased noise and vehicle movements during the night.

To gather evidence of the current and potential future disruption, it was proposed that an HGV count be conducted. This would involve the use of private CCTV to monitor vehicle movements through the village over a continuous 24-hour period. The resulting data would be used to demonstrate to the Highways authority the scale of the issue and to support a case for the restriction of HGV traffic through the village.

Volunteers will be required to assist in reviewing CCTV footage and counting vehicle movements.

The Council agreed that a traffic count is necessary to provide robust evidence of the scale of HGV activity and the potential community impact of expanded Biomass operations.

002509.3 Land at Playground: In anticipation of the potential relocation of the village play park to the Parish Council site adjacent to the Bay Horse Inn, councillors discussed future use of the current play park land. Two proposals were considered:

1. **Use as a paddock** – While the current presence of ragwort makes the site unsuitable for horses, the interested party willing to rent the land for this purpose has offered to carry out the necessary removal work to make it viable.
2. **Use as private dog-walking space** – An alternative proposal has been received from residents (non-commercial) wishing to fence the land for private dog walking. The applicants would fund and undertake the fencing themselves and have requested a long-term rental arrangement to justify their investment. There is a known badger sett at the perimeter of the land, which the residents indicated would be protected and not disturbed.

Councillors debated the merits of prioritising village residents versus non-residents in allocating use of parish land. Consideration was also given to ensuring continued access to the beacon located on the land, which is used for community events.

A rental amount of £100 per month over a five-year term was proposed as a fair rate, subject to a legal agreement that clearly defines the rental period, permitted use, fencing specifications, and access to the beacon.

The Council acknowledged the viability of both proposals and recognised the importance of prioritising residents while balancing the commitment and investment offered by any party.

Actions Arising:

Clerk to arrange for a draft legal agreement to be prepared, including conditions relating to fencing, badger sett protection, beacon access, and term of lease.

Final decision to be deferred to the next meeting pending further information

002509.4 Street Lighting. - The Clerk advised that North Yorkshire Council have been requested to undertake repairs to the L19 street lighting based on their quotation.

032510. Action taken since last meeting.

Brocklesby's interest in Council land: The Clerk provided an update on his enquiries with the North Yorkshire Council Parish Liaison group regarding the proposed sale of the plot of land on Green Lane to Brocklesby's. Specifically, clarification was sought on the legal framework governing such a sale and the appropriate valuation process to be followed.

Advice from the relevant departments within the authority is expected in due course to ensure the correct procedures are observed and the transaction is conducted transparently and lawfully.

032511. Councillors' Forum:

- **Parish Room Ownership:** The Clerk advised that following interrogation of the Land Registry it is confirmed that Heck Parish Council are registered owners of the Parish Room with effective registration on 8th December 1992.

032512. To confirm date, time and place of next meetings: 2nd Sept 2025.

032513. Closure of meeting – the meeting closed at 20:30 hrs.

