

WEST DEEPING ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Tuesday 12th May 2026 at 7pm

in the Village Hall

Council Attendees – Glenn Fuller (Chairman), Gareth Williams, Susan Latham, Anna Thompson and Clare Strak, Michelle Dickens (Clerk).

Members of the public – 10.

Welcome by the Chairman – Cllr. Fuller welcomed everyone.

Chairmans Report – Provided and read out by Cllr. Fuller. (See Appendix A attached).

Financial Report – Provided by the Clerk and read out by Cllr. Fuller. (See Appendix B attached).

Meeting finished at 7.12pm, after which the Annual Parish Council Meeting commenced.

Michelle Dickens

31st May 2026

Appendix A

Good evening everyone,

Thank you all for coming this evening and for your continued support, involvement and commitment to our village and community over the past year.

It has been an exceptionally busy and important year for the Parish Council and for West Deeping as a whole. Much of our work has inevitably centred around the proposed mineral extraction sites SG17 and SG11 and the emerging Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan, but alongside this we have continued the day-to-day work of supporting and maintaining the village, representing residents, managing local governance matters and planning positively for the future of our parish.

Tonight, I would like to reflect on some of the key events, challenges and achievements of the past twelve months.

Without doubt, the defining issue of the year has been the campaign surrounding the proposed mineral extraction sites SG17 and SG11.

These proposals represented one of the most serious challenges the village has faced in generations and raised very significant concerns across a wide range of issues affecting the future of West Deeping.

Residents expressed strong concerns regarding the potential impact on public health and wellbeing, traffic and highway safety, environmental harm, noise, landscape impact, groundwater and hydrological risks, the cumulative effects of decades of quarrying activity around the village and the overall effect on the character and sustainability of the parish.

There were also major concerns regarding the potential impact on important heritage assets within and around West Deeping, including the West Deeping Conservation Area, the River Welland corridor and the Grade II* listed Molecey Mill and Granary, which the council's own documents described as being immediately adjacent to the proposed extraction area.

Over the course of the year, residents, volunteers and supporters devoted an extraordinary amount of time and energy to ensuring that the concerns of the community were properly represented throughout the Minerals and Waste Plan process.

The Parish Council submitted detailed representations and worked tirelessly to ensure that the village's concerns were heard clearly, respectfully and with supporting evidence.

This was not an easy process.

The proposed mineral operator continued to strongly promote the sites throughout the plan process and fought vigorously for their inclusion until the very end.

At times the process was frustrating. Lincolnshire County Council itself acknowledged receiving over 3,000 consultation responses, with approximately 85% relating to the West Deeping sites, yet many residents felt that only a fraction of those concerns appeared to be reflected in the later draft reports.

Historic England maintained serious concerns regarding the likely heritage impacts, including the view that the proposals could cause a "severe setting impact", while the Environment Agency also raised concerns regarding groundwater conditions and the potential risk of basal heave associated with deep extraction below the water table.

Despite the many challenges faced, the latest draft of the emerging Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan published this month does not take forward SG17 or SG11 for allocation.

This is an enormously significant moment for the village.

If ultimately confirmed through the remainder of the plan process, it means that West Deeping will have avoided the prospect of around forty more years of major mineral extraction affecting the village and its surrounding environment.

Furthermore, once the existing nearby operations conclude, West Deeping will, for the first time in more than 75 years, potentially be free from active quarrying operations.

This has only been possible because of the remarkable unity, determination and resilience shown by the community.

The Parish Council would therefore like to sincerely thank every resident, volunteer and supporter who contributed in any way — whether through research, letters, objections, professional expertise, attendance at meetings or simply through encouragement and support for one another throughout a very long process.

Special thanks should also be extended to Henry Tinsley for recognising the strength of feeling within the village and for the role he played in helping bring this matter to a conclusion, continuing a long and historic relationship between the Tinsley family and West Deeping.

Alongside the quarry campaign, the Council has continued to deal with the considerable day-to-day responsibilities of running an active parish council.

This has included responding to resident enquiries, managing ongoing parish matters, liaising with external authorities, handling Freedom of Information requests, ensuring proper governance procedures and continuing to represent the interests of residents on a wide range of issues affecting the parish.

Transparency and accountability are important parts of local government and the Council will always seek to respond appropriately and responsibly to requests for information.

However, it is also important to recognise that extensive and repeated Freedom of Information requests can place a very significant burden on a small parish council operated largely by volunteers and supported by limited public funds. Responding properly to such requests often requires considerable amounts of councillor and clerk time, administrative work and cost, which inevitably diverts valuable resources away from other important village matters and positive community work.

I would therefore respectfully encourage residents to think carefully about the necessity, scope and proportionality of requests before submitting them, particularly where information may already be publicly available or where informal dialogue could often resolve matters more constructively and efficiently.

As many of you know, this year also saw the resignation of our long-serving Parish Clerk Ian, whom we thank sincerely for his service and commitment to the village over many years.

The Council subsequently undertook the recruitment process for a new Clerk and we are very pleased to welcome Michelle Dickens into the role. Michelle brings valuable experience from other parish councils and has already been working hard to support the Council and the village.

I would also like to thank all parish councillors for the considerable amount of time they continue to dedicate voluntarily to village matters, often behind the scenes and outside of formal meetings.

Beyond the major strategic issues, the Parish Council has continued to support and monitor a wide range of local matters including highways and traffic concerns, planning consultations, environmental and conservation matters and maintaining the long-term interests and character of West Deeping.

The Council remains committed to protecting the unique heritage, landscape and identity of the village whilst also ensuring that West Deeping remains a thriving and positive community for future generations.

Whilst the recent quarry announcement is extremely encouraging, the Parish Council remains cautious and vigilant.

The Minerals and Waste Local Plan process is not yet fully complete and we will continue to monitor developments carefully to ensure the interests of the village remain fully protected.

At the same time, we hope the village can now begin to look forward positively after many years of uncertainty and concern.

West Deeping is a remarkable village with an equally remarkable community spirit.

This year has demonstrated what can be achieved when a community works together respectfully, constructively and persistently.

Finally, on behalf of the Parish Council, I would like once again to thank all residents for their continued support, patience and involvement over the past year.

The strength of feeling, commitment and community spirit shown throughout this period has been extraordinary and something of which the entire village should be proud.

Thank you all very much.

WEST DEEPING PARISH COUNCIL

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2026

During the course of the year, we received income of £12,255 representing our precept of £11,500, levies for use of the Boaty of £260, burial fees of £247 and £96 of bank interest. In addition, we reclaimed VAT on previous year's expenditure of £152.

Our expenditure amounted to £10,944 which comprised of maintenance in the village under our amenity contract with Gary's Gardens totalling £1,860 (excluding costs for the Tinsley Field which are reimbursed to us by West Deeping Parish Charity), payments to the clerk of £7,234, plus Employer National Insurance contributions of £373, new pads and batteries for our defibrillator costing £209, additional gravel for the Boaty of £172 and general administration costs of £1,096, which includes our annual insurance, cemetery fees and subscriptions.

Overall, therefore, our total funds increased during the year from £1,311 to £3,472.

In our initial budget for the year, an allowance of £500 was made towards the upkeep of the Boaty, with additional provision for repairs and tree work. Some costs for these were incurred during the year, as above, but additional costs are also anticipated for these in the next financial year.

During the course of the year, councillors also recognised the need for our bus shelter to be replaced over the medium to long term. Consequently, it has been suggested that part of any surplus funds accrued to date, along with any additional amounts in future years, could be notionally allocated for this purpose.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) forms have been completed and our finances during the year have been inspected and agreed by our internal auditor. These will be submitted for approval at the Annual Parish Council Meeting, following which the usual requirements will be met in conjunction with the external auditors, PKF Littlejohn.

Michelle Dickens
Responsible Financial Officer
West Deeping Parish Council

12th May 2026